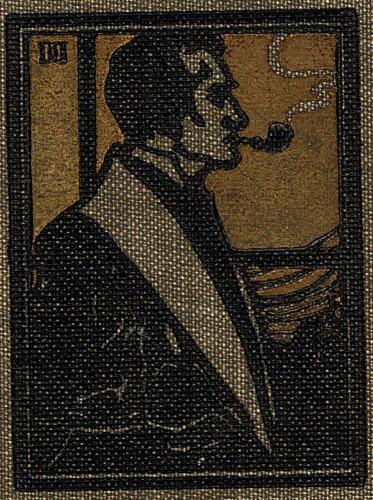
CONAN DOYLE'S BEST BOOKS

IN THREE VOLUMES

Illustrated



A STUDY IN SCARLET

AND OTHER STORIES

SHERLOCK HOLMES EDITION

CONAN DOYLE'S BEST BOOKS

VOL. I

STORIES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

SHERLOCK HOLMES EDITION

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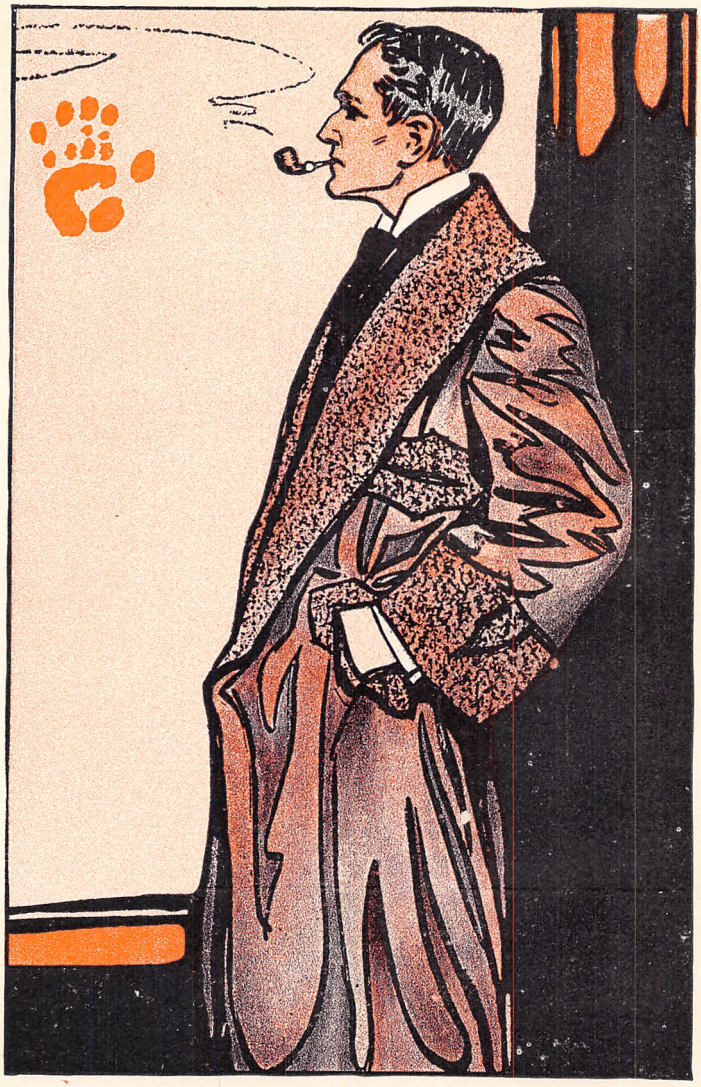

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A STUDY IN SCARLET

AND OTHER STORIES

SHERLOCK HOLMES EDITION

NEW YORK
P. F. COLLIER & SON, PUBLISHERS

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THE ORIGINAL OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

BY DR. HAROLD EMERY JONES

The writer was a fellow-student of Conan Doyle. Together they attended the surgical demonstrations of Joseph Bell, at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. This man exhibited incredibly acute and sure deductive powers in diagnosis and in guessing the vocation of patients from external signs. Sir Henry Littlejohn, another medical lecturer heard by the two students, was remarkable for his sagacious expert testimony, leading to the conviction of many a criminal. Thus is the character of Sherlock Holmes easily and naturally accounted for, and the absurd fiction that Conan Doyle drew upon Poe for his ideas is silenced forever.

WHEN it was known that Dr. Conan Doyle had decided on bringing Sherlock Holmes back to the land of the living, a number of his admirers were fearful lest the author wreck his own reputation and destroy the interesting and unique character of Sherlock Holmes, by attempting what was seemingly an impossibility or, at any rate, an absurdity. Conan Doyle's friends, however, had supreme confidence in his ability to revivify Sherlock Holmes in an artistic and natural manner. After "The Adventure of the Empty House," admirers and friends could not but exclaim in unison: "How simple! How plausible! How clever!"

The great mystery, which has as yet never been cleared up, is whether Holmes ever really existed. Is Holmes merely the creation of Doyle's ingenious

brain? Or is there really an individual who is the living embodiment of Sherlock Holmes?

Conan Doyle is essentially an Edinburgh product. He was born there. His medical studies were pursued in that ancient city of medical lore. His father was a well-known artist. He himself was the nephew of the famous Dicky Doyle, and his grandfather was the celebrated caricaturist John Doyle, known to the public as H. B. So the author had, to say the least, a heritage of promise. His first literary venture was as editor of a school magazine in Germany, where he was sent to receive his early education. Prior to that he had attended a private school in England. Leaving Germany, he returned to Edinburgh, where he entered the University for the purpose of studying medicine.

To a man of Doyle's alertness, memory, and imagination, this training was invaluable. It was in the infirmary wards at Edinburgh, in the dispensaries, and in the out-patient department that he first encountered that subtle and wonderful character who is now world-renowned, the original of the great detective, Sherlock Holmes.

All Edinburgh medical students remember Joseph Bell—Joe Bell—as they called him. Always alert, always up and doing, nothing ever escaped that keen eye of his. He read both patients and students like so many open books. His diagnosis was almost never at fault.

One would never dream, by looking through "Who's Who" (in England), that the person described as follows is the original of the great detective, Sherlock Holmes:

"Joseph Bell, M.D., F.R.C.S., Edinburgh; consulting Surgeon to the Royal Infirmary and Royal Hospital for Sick Children. Member of University Court, Edinburgh University; born in Edinburgh in the year 1837. The eldest son of Benjamin Bell, Surgeon, and of Cecilia Craigie. Married to Edith Katherine, daughter of the Honorable James Erskine Murray. Went through the ordinary course of a Hospital Surgeon at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, from Dresser to Senior Surgeon and Consulting Surgeon. Twenty-three years (1873-96) editor of the 'Edinburgh Medical Journal.'"

Yet he is the original Sherlock Holmes—the Edinburgh medical students' ideal—who could tell patients their habits, their occupations, nationality, and often their names, and who rarely, if ever, made a mistake. Oftentimes he would call upon one of the students to diagnose the cases for him. Telling the House Surgeon to usher in a new patient, he delighted in putting the deductive powers of the student to the test, with results generally amusing, except to the poor student victim himself.

This is Conan Doyle's description of Joseph Bell: "He would sit in the patients' waiting-room, with a face like a Red Indian, and diagnose the people as

they came in, before even they opened their mouths. He would tell them their symptoms, and would even give them details of their past life, and he would hardly ever make a mistake."

What Edinburgh student of Conan Doyle's student years can fail to recognize in the stoic-faced professor, Joe Bell, the "king of deduction"?

"What is the matter with this man, sir?" he suddenly inquired of a trembling student. "Come down, sir, and look at him! No! You mustn't touch him. Use your eyes, sir! Use your ears, use your brain, your bump of perception, and use your powers of deduction."

After looking at the patient, the embryonic Holmes blurted out: "Hip-joint diease, sir!"

"Hip-nothing!" Bell retorted. "The man's limp is not from his hip, but from his foot, or rather from his feet. Were you to observe closely, you would see that there are slits, cut by a knife, in those parts of the shoes where the pressure of the shoe is greatest against the foot. The man is a sufferer from corns, gentlemen, and has no hip trouble at all. He has not come here to be treated for corns, gentlemen. We are not chiropodists. His trouble is of a much more serious nature. This is a case of chronic alcoholism, gentlemen. The rubicund nose, the puffed, bloated face, the bloodshot eyes, the tremulous hands and twitching face muscles, with the quick, pulsating temporal arteries, all show this. These deductions,

gentlemen, must, however, be confirmed by absolute and concrete evidence. In this instance my diagnosis is confirmed by the fact of my seeing the neck of a whiskey-bottle protruding from the patient's right-hand coat pocket.

"From close observation and deduction, gentlemen, you can make a correct diagnosis of any and every case. However, never neglect to ratify your deductions, to substantiate your diagnosis with the stethoscope, and by other recognized and every-day methods of diagnosis."

Of another patient he would say: "Gentlemen, we have here a man who is either a cork-cutter or a slater. If you will only use your eyes a moment you will be able to define a slight hardening—a regular callous, gentlemen—on one side of his forefinger, and a thickening on the outside of his thumb, a sure sign that he follows the one occupation or the other."

Or again: "Gentlemen, a fisherman! You will notice that, though this is a very hot summer's day, the patient is wearing top--boots. When he sat on the chair they were plainly visible. No one but a sailor would wear top-boots at this season of the year. The shade of tan on his face shows him to be a coast-sailor, and not a deep-sea sailor—a sailor who makes foreign lands. His tan is that produced by one climate, a 'local tan,' so to speak. A knife scabbard shows beneath his coat, the kind used by fishermen in this part of the world. He is concealing a quid of tobacco in

the furthest corner of his mouth and manages it very adroitly indeed, gentlemen. The summary of these deductions shows that this man is a fisherman. Further, to prove the correctness of these deductions, I notice several fish-scales adhering to his clothes and hands, while the odor of fish announced his arrival in a most marked and striking manner."

On one occasion he called upon a student to diagnose a case. The student made a miserable failure of it.

"Get out your notebook, man," said Bell, "and see whether you can't express your thoughts that way." Then, turning to the class, the Professor continued: "The gentleman has ears and he hears not, eyes and he sees not! You come from Wales, don't you, sir?" —again turning to the poor victim—"I thought so! A man who says 'silling' for shilling, who rattles his R's, who has a peculiar, rough, broad accent like yours, sir, is not a Scotchman. You are not an Irishman! You are not an Englishman! Your speech 'smacks of Wales.' And to clinch the matter, gentlemen"—once more addressing the class—"when I asked Mr. Edward Jones—that is his name, gentlemen—to transfer his thoughts to paper, he nervously pulled out his notebook, and, to his chagrin, with it a letter. Mr. Jones endeavored to palm the letter, gentlemen; but he is evidently a little out of training at present, as he blundered most beautifully. The postmark shows that the letter was posted yesterday morn-

ing at Cardiff. The address was written by a female —undoubtedly Mr. Jones's sweetheart—for the very sight of it caused our friend to blush furiously. It was addressed to Mr. Edward Jones! Now, gentlemen! Cardiff is in South Wales, and the name Jones proclaims our friend a Welshman."

According to Doyle, Bell's faculty of deduction was at times highly dramatic. "Ah," he would say to one of the patients, "you are a soldier, and a non-commissioned officer at that. You have served in Bermuda. Now how do I know that, gentlemen? Because he came into the room without even taking his hat off, as he would go into an orderly room. He was a soldier. A slight, authoritative air, combined with his age, shows that he was a non-commissioned officer. A rash on his forehead tells me he was in Bermuda and subject to a certain rash known only there."

Bell was as full of dry humor and satire, and he was as jealous of his reputation, as the detective Sherlock Holmes ever thought of being.

One day, in the lecture theatre, he gave the students a long talk on the necessity for the members of the medical profession cultivating their senses—sight, smell, taste, and hearing. Before him on a table stood a large tumbler filled with a dark, amber-colored liquid.

"This, gentlemen," announced the Professor, "contains a very potent drug. To the taste it is intensely bitter. It is most offensive to the sense of smell.

Yet, as far as the sense of sight is concerned—that is, in color—it is no different from dozens of other liquids.

"Now I want to see how many of you gentlemen have educated your powers of perception. Of course, we might easily analyze this chemically, and find out what it is. But I want you to test it by smell and taste; and, as I don't ask anything of my students which I wouldn't be willing to do myself, I will taste it before passing it round."

Here he dipped his finger in the liquid, and placed it in his mouth. The tumbler was passed round. With wry and sour faces the students followed the Professor's lead. One after another tasted the vile decoction; varied and amusing were the grimaces made. The tumbler, having gone the round, was returned to the Professor.

"Gentlemen," said he, with a laugh, "I am deeply grieved to find that not one of you has developed this power of perception, which I so often speak about; for if you had watched me closely, you would have found that, while I placed my forefinger in the medicine, it was the middle finger which found its way into my mouth."

These methods of Bell impressed Doyle greatly at the time. The impression made was a lasting one.

But, while Joseph Bell is the original Sherlock Holmes, another Edinburgh professor "had a finger in the pie," so to speak.

While Joseph Bell gave Doyle the idea of the character Holmes, the man who, unknowingly perhaps, influenced Doyle in adapting that character to the detection of crime, was Sir Henry Littlejohn.

"Little-John," as the students called him, was the Police Surgeon and the Medical Officer of Health to the City of Edinburgh. He was also Lecturer on Forensic Medicine and Public Health at the Royal College of Surgeons.

No teacher ever took a greater interest in his students than did Sir Henry. He not only lectured to "his boys"—as he always spoke of them—in the lecture-room, but he took them to the city slaughter-houses, and to the reservoirs which supply Edinburgh with water. Here he would explain the why and the wherefore of hygiene. As Police Surgeon he had unlimited liberties and unequaled facilities for the study of crime and criminals. It was a common but interesting sight to see the dapper Sir Henry Littlejohn, little both in stature and name, walking along the street with a crowd of medical students trailing along behind. His lectures on crime and criminals were always entertaining and instructive, as they were generally straightforward statements of personal experiences.

While Bell was lecturing deduction and perception into Doyle's receptive and imaginative brain, Sir Henry Littlejohn was giving Doyle material for his detective stories.

Whenever a mysterious or suspected murder was perpetrated, Sir Henry loved to ferret out the criminals and clear up the crime. He always gave expert medical evidence in the law courts, and, being Police Surgeon, of necessity testified for the Crown on behalf of the prosecution.

It was a red-letter day for Edinburgh medical students when Sir Henry was due in the witness-box. How they flocked around the courthouse, and how they fought to gain an entrance! Even standing-room was at a premium on these occasions; one and all were anxious to hear their "Little-John" testify. For Sir Henry never got the worst of the argument. He was never entrapped by the smartest of lawyers, and never disconcerted by the severest of cross-examinations.

One case, out of hundreds of a similar kind, will exemplify his knowledge of criminals and crime, and show his readiness of repartee.

A woman was charged with the poisoning of her husband. Arsenic had been found in the stomach of the dead man. The prosecution failed, however, to prove that the woman had purchased arsenic. As the law in the British Isles is very explicit and severe in its restriction of the sale of poisons, and at all times is strictly enforced, the defence made much of the failure of the prosecution to prove the purchasing of the arsenic. No poison in class A—in which class arsenic is placed—can be bought at

any chemist's shop unless the sale is entered in the Government Poison Book—a book kept specially for that purpose. The signatures of vender, buyer, and a witness, known to both parties, must be attached. No record of the sale of arsenic could be found in any of the city druggists' establishments. Sir Henry's attention was called to this fact by the attorney for the defence.

"So you found arsenic in the stomach of the deceased?" inquired the lawyer.

"I did," answered Sir Henry, in his usual quick and decided manner.

"But where could the arsenic have been procured?" questioned the attorney. "We have no record of the sale!"

"Why," retorted Littlejohn scornfully, "there is enough arsenic in the room where the man slept to poison a small army, right at hand, on the very walls of the room itself. The green wall-paper, with which the walls of the room are covered, is saturated with arsenic."

"True, perhaps," replied the man of law, "but surely the defendant is not sufficiently versed in chemistry—she is certainly not well enough educated—to understand the very difficult and complicated process of extracting arsenic from wall-paper, even if the wall-paper contains arsenic—which is very, very doubtful."

"Some women's intuition is greater than certain

men's knowledge," answered Sir Henry, pointedly and dryly.

The cross-examining lawyer immediately ceased his questioning. The woman later admitted her crime, and Little-John again scored.

The University, with its associations, with its antiquity, with the respect and affection shown professors by students, with the unlimited trouble taken by professors with the students, and the general atmosphere and environments of both the University and Edinburgh itself, had undoubtedly an influence upon Conan Doyle's literary work, and a potent influence at that.

A STUDY IN SCARLET.

PART I.

BEING A REPRINT FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF JOHN H. WATSON, M. D., LATE OF THE ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

CHAPTER I.

MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES.

IN the year 1878 I took my degree of Doctor of Medicine of the University of London, and proceeded to Netley to go through the course prescribed for surgeons in the army. Having completed my studies there, I was duly attached to the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers as assistant surgeon. The regiment was stationed in India at the time, and before I could join it the second Afghan war had broken out. On landing at Bombay I learned that my corps had advanced through the passes, and was already deep in the enemy's country. I followed, however, with many other officers

who were in the same situation as myself, and succeeded in reaching Candahar in safety, where I found my regiment, and at once entered upon my new duties.

The campaign brought honors and promotion to many, but for me it had nothing but misfortune and disaster. I was removed from my brigade and attached to the Berkshires, with whom I served at the fatal battle of Maiwand. There I was struck on the shoulder by a Jezail bullet, which shattered the bone and grazed the subclavian artery. I should have fallen into the hands of the murderous Ghazis had it not been for the devotion and courage shown by Murray, my orderly, who threw me across a pack-horse and succeeded in bringing me safely to the British lines.

Worn with pain, and weak from the prolonged hardships which I had undergone, I was removed, with a great train of wounded sufferers, to the base hospital at Peshawur. Here I rallied, and had already improved so far as to be able to walk about the wards, and even to bask a little upon the veranda, when I was struck down by enteric fever, that curse of our Indian possessions. For months my life was despaired of, and when at last I came to myself and became convalescent, I was so weak and emaciated that a medical board determined that not a day should be lost in sending me back to England. I was dispatched, accordingly, in the troop-ship "Orontes," and landed a month later on Portsmouth jetty, with my health irretrievably

ruined, but with permission from a paternal government to spend the next nine months in attempting to improve it.

I had neither kith nor kin in England, and was therefore as free as air—or as free as an income of eleven shillings and sixpence a day will permit a man to be. Under such circumstances I naturally gravitated to London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the empire are irresistibly drained. There I stayed for some time at a private hotel in the Strand, leading a comfortless, meaningless existence, and spending such money as I had considerably more freely than I ought. So alarming did the state of my finances become, that I soon realized I must either leave the metropolis and rusticate somewhere in the country, or that I must make a complete alteration in my style of living. Choosing the latter alternative, I began by making up my mind to leave the hotel, and to take up my quarters in some less pretentious and less expensive domicile.

On the very day that I had come to this conclusion, I was standing at the Criterion bar, when some one tapped me on the shoulder, and turning round I recognized young Stamford, who had been a dresser under me at Bart's. The sight of a friendly face in the great wilderness of London is a pleasant thing indeed to a lonely man. In old days Stamford had never been a particular crony of mine, but now I hailed him with enthusiasm, and he, in his turn, appeared to be de-

lighted to see me. In the exuberance of my joy I asked him to lunch with me at the Holborn, and we started off together in a hansom.

"Whatever have you been doing with yourself, Watson?" he asked, in undisguised wonder, as we rattled through the crowded London streets. "You are as thin as a lath and as brown as a nut."

I gave him a short sketch of my adventures, and had hardly concluded it by the time that we reached our destination.

"Poor devil!" he said, commiseratingly, after he had listened to my misfortunes. "What are you up to now?"

"Looking for lodgings," I answered. "Trying to solve the problem as to whether it is possible to get comfortable rooms at a reasonable price."

"That is a strange thing," remarked my companion; "you are the second man to-day that has used that expression to me."

"And who was the first?" I asked.

"A fellow who is working at the chemical laboratory up at the hospital. He was bemoaning himself this morning because he could not get some one to go halves with him in some nice rooms which he had found, and which were too much for his purse."

"By Jove!" I cried, "if he really wants some one to share the rooms and the expense, I am the very man for him. I should prefer having a partner to being alone."

Young Stamford looked rather strangely at me over his wine-glass.

"You don't know Sherlock Holmes yet," he said; "perhaps you would not care for him as a constant companion."

"Why, what is there against him?"

"Oh, I didn't say there was anything against him. He is a little queer in his ideas—an enthusiast in some branches of science. As far as I know he is a decent fellow enough.

"A medical student, I suppose?" said I.

"No; I have no idea what he intends to go in for. I believe he is well up in anatomy, and he is a first-class chemist; but, as far as I know, he has never taken out any systematic medical classes. His studies are very desultory and eccentric, but he has amassed a lot of out-of-the-way knowledge which would astonish his professors."

"Did you never ask him what he was going in for?" I asked.

"No; he is not a man that it is easy to draw out, though he can be communicative enough when the fancy seizes him."

"I should like to meet him," I said. "If I am to lodge with any one, I should prefer a man of studious and quiet habits. I am not strong enough yet to stand much noise or excitement. I had enough of both in Afghanistan to last me for the remainder of

my natural existence. How could I meet this friend of yours?"

"He is sure to be at the laboratory. He either avoids the place for weeks, or else he works there from morning to night. If you like, we shall drive round together after luncheon."

"Certainly," I answered; and the conversation drifted away into other channels.

As we made our way to the hospital after leaving the Holborn, Stamford gave me a few more particulars about the gentleman whom I proposed to take as a fellow-lodger.

"You musn't blame me if you don't get on with him," he said; "I know nothing more of him than I have learned from meeting him occasionally in the laboratory. You proposed this arrangement, so you must not hold me responsible."

"If we don't get on it will be easy to part company," I answered. "It seems to me, Stamford," I added, looking hard at my companion, "that you have some reason for washing your hands of the matter. Is this fellow's temper so formidable, or what is it? Don't be mealy-mouthed about it."

"It is not easy to express the inexpressible," he answered, with a laugh. "Holmes is a little too scientific for my tastes—it approaches to cold-bloodedness. I could imagine his giving a friend a little pinch of the latest vegetable alkaloid, not out of malevolence, you

understand, but simply out of a spirit of inquiry in order to have an accurate idea of the effects. To do him justice, I think that he would take it himself with the same readiness. He appears to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge."

"Very right, too."

"Yes; but it may be pushed to excess. When it comes to beating the subjects in the dissecting-rooms with a stick, it is certainly taking rather a bizarre shape."

"Beating the subjects!"

"Yes; to verify how far bruises may be produced after death. I saw him at it with my own eyes."

"And yet you say he is not a medical student?"

"No. Heaven knows what the objects of his studies are! But here we are, and you must form your own impressions about him."

As he spoke we turned down a narrow lane and passed through a small side door, which opened into a wing of the great hospital. It was familiar ground to me, and I needed no guiding as we ascended the bleak stone staircase and made our way down the long corridor, with its vista of whitewashed wall and dun-colored doors. Near the further end a low, arched passage branched away from it and led to the chemical laboratory.

This was a lofty chamber, lined and littered with countless bottles. Broad, low tables were scattered about, which bristled with retorts, test-tubes, and little

Bunsen lamps, with their blue, flickering flames. There was only one student in the room, who was bending over a distant table absorbed in his work. At the sound of our steps he glanced round and sprang to his feet with a cry of pleasure.

"I've found it! I've found it!" he shouted to my companion, running toward us with a test-tube in his hand. "I have found a reagent which is precipitated by hæmoglobin, and by nothing else."

Had he discovered a gold mine greater delight could not have shone upon his features.

"Dr. Watson—Mr. Sherlock Holmes," said Stamford, introducing us.

"How are you?" he said, cordially, gripping my hand with a strength for which I should hardly have given him credit. "You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive."

"How on earth did you know that?" I asked, in astonishment.

"Never mind," said he, chuckling to himself. "The question now is about hæmoglobin. No doubt you see the significance of this discovery of mine?"

"It is interesting, chemically, no doubt," I answered; "but practically"——

"Why, man, it is the most practical medico-legal discovery for years. Don't you see that it gives us an infallible test for blood-stains? Come over here, now!" He seized me by the coat-sleeve in his eagerness and drew me over to the table at which he had

been working. "Let us have some fresh blood," he said, digging a long bodkin into his finger and drawing off the resulting drop of blood in a chemical pipette. "Now, I add this small quantity of blood to a litre of water. You perceive that the resulting mixture has the appearance of true water. The proportion of blood cannot be more than one in a million. I have no doubt, however, that we shall be able to obtain the characteristic reaction."

As he spoke he threw into the vessel a few white crystals, and then added some drops of a transparent fluid. In an instant the contents assumed a dull mahogany color, and a brownish dust was precipitated to the bottom of the glass jar.

"Ha! ha!" he cried, clapping his hands and looking as delighted as a child with a new toy. "What do you think of that?"

"It seems to be a very delicate test," I remarked.

"Beautiful! beautiful! The old guaiacum test was very clumsy and uncertain. So is the microscopic examination for blood-corpuscles. The latter is valueless if the stains are a few hours old. Now, this appears to act as well whether the blood is old or new. Had this test been invented, there are hundreds of men now walking the earth who would long ago have paid the penalty of their crimes."

"Indeed!" I murmured.

"Criminal cases are continually hinging upon that one point. A man is suspected of a crime months, per-

haps, after it has been committed. His linen or clothes are examined, and brownish stains discovered upon them. Are they blood-stains, or mud-stains, or rust-stains, or fruit-stains, or what are they? That is a question which has puzzled many an expert; and why? Because there was no reliable test. Now we have the Sherlock Holmes test, and there will no longer be any difficulty."

His eyes fairly glittered as he spoke, and he put his hand over his heart and bowed as if to some applauding crowd conjured up by his imagination.

"You are to be congratulated," I remarked, considerably surprised at his enthusiasm.

"There was the case of Von Bischoff at Frankfort last year. He would certainly have been hung had this test been in existence. Then there was Mason, of Bradford, and the notorious Muller, and Lefevre, of Montpellier, and Samson, of New Orleans. I could name a score of cases in which it would have been decisive."

"You seem to be a walking calendar of crime," said Stamford, with a laugh. "You might start a paper on those lines. Call it the 'Police News of the Past.' "

"Very interesting reading it might be made, too," remarked Sherlock Holmes, sticking a small piece of plaster over the prick of his finger. "I have to be careful," he continued, turning to me with a smile, "for I dabble with poisons a good deal."

He held out his hand as he spoke, and I noticed that

it was all mottled over with similar pieces of plaster and discolored with strong acids.

"We came here on business," said Stamford, sitting down on a three-legged stool and pushing another one in my direction with his foot. "My friend here wants to take diggings, and as you were complaining that you could get no one to go halves with you, I thought that I had better bring you together."

Sherlock Holmes seemed delighted at the idea of sharing his rooms with me.

"I have my eye on a suite in Baker street," he said, "which would suit us down to the ground. You don't mind the smell of strong tobacco, I hope?"

"I always smoke 'ship's' myself," I answered.

"That's good enough. I generally have chemicals about, and occasionally do experiments. Would that annoy you?"

"By no means."

"Let me see—what are my other shortcomings? I get in the dumps at times, and don't open my mouth for days on end. You must not think I am sulky when I do that. Just let me alone, and I'll soon be all right. What have you to confess, now? It's just as well for two fellows to know the worst of each other before they begin to live together."

I laughed at this cross-examination.

"I keep a bull-pup," I said, "and object to rows, because my nerves are shaken, and I get up at all sorts of ungodly hours, and I am extremely lazy. I have

another set of vices when I'm well, but those are the principal ones at present."

"Do you include violin-playing in your category of rows?" he asked, anxiously.

"It depends on the player," I answered. "A well-played violin is a treat for the gods; a badly played one"——

"Oh, that's all right," he cried, with a merry laugh. "I think we may consider the thing as settled—that is, if the rooms are agreeable to you."

"When shall we see them?"

"Call for me here at noon to-morrow, and we'll go together and settle everything," he answered.

"All right—noon exactly," said I, shaking his hand.

We left him working among his chemicals, and we walked together toward my hotel.

"By the way," I asked, suddenly, stopping and turning upon Stamford, "how the deuce did he know that I had come from Afghanistan?"

My companion smiled an enigmatical smile.

"That's just his little peculiarity," he said. "A good many people have wanted to know how he finds things out."

"Oh, a mystery, is it?" I cried, rubbing my hands. "This is very piquant. I am much obliged to you for bringing us together. 'The proper study of mankind is man,' you know."

"You must study him, then," Stamford said, as he bid me good-by. "You'll find him a knotty problem,

though. I'll wager he learns more about you than you about him. Good-by."

"Good-by," I answered; and strolled on to my hotel, considerably interested in my new acquaintance.

CHAPTER II.

THE SCIENCE OF DEDUCTION.

We met next day, as he had arranged, and inspected the rooms at No. 221 Baker Street, of which he had spoken at our meeting. They consisted of a couple of comfortable bedrooms and a single, large, airy sitting-room, cheerfully furnished, and illuminated by two broad windows. So desirable in every way were the apartments, and so moderate did the terms seem when divided between us, that the bargain was concluded upon the spot, and we at once entered into possession. That very evening I moved my things round from the hotel, and on the following morning Sherlock Holmes followed me with several boxes and portmanteaus. For a day or two we were busily employed in unpacking and laying out our property to the best advantage. That done, we gradually began to settle down and to accommodate ourselves to our new surroundings.

Holmes was certainly not a difficult man to live with. He was quiet in his ways, and his habits were regular. It was rare for him to be up after ten at night, and he

SHERLOCK HOLMES IN DISGUISE

—A Study in Scarlet

had invariably breakfasted and gone out before I rose in the morning. Sometimes he spent his day at the chemical laboratory, sometimes in the dissecting-rooms, and occasionally in long walks, which appeared to take him into the lowest portions of the city. Nothing could exceed his energy when the working fit was upon him; but now and again a reaction would seize him, and for days on end he would lie upon the sofa in the sitting-room, hardly uttering a word or moving a muscle from morning to night. On these occasions I have noticed such a dreamy, vacant expression in his eyes, that I might have suspected him of being addicted to the use of some narcotic had not the temperance and cleanliness of his whole life forbidden such a notion.

As the weeks went by my interest in him and my curiosity as to his aims in life gradually deepened and increased. His very person and appearance were such as to strike the attention of the most casual observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing, save during those intervals of torpor to which I have alluded; and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination. His hands were invariably blotted with ink and stained with chemicals, yet he was possessed of extraordinary delicacy of touch, as I frequently had

occasion to observe when I watched him manipulating his fragile philosophical instruments.

The reader may set me down as a hopeless busybody when I confess how much this man stimulated my curiosity, and how often I endeavored to break through the reticence which he showed on all that concerned himself. Before pronouncing judgment, however, be it remembered how objectless was my life, and how little there was to engage my attention. My health forbade me from venturing out unless the weather was exceptionally genial, and I had no friends who would call upon me and break the monotony of my daily existence. Under these circumstances I eagerly hailed the little mystery which hung around my companion, and spent much of my time in endeavoring to unravel it.

He was not studying medicine. He had himself, in reply to a question, confirmed Stamford's opinion upon that point. Neither did he appear to have pursued any course of reading which might fit him for a degree in science or any other recognized portal which would give him an entrance into the learned world. Yet his zeal for certain studies was remarkable, and within eccentric limits his knowledge was so extraordinarily ample and minute that his observations have fairly astounded me. Surely no man would work so hard to attain such precise information unless he had some definite end in view. Desultory readers are seldom remarkable for the exactness of their learning. No

man burdens his mind with small matters unless he has some very good reason for doing so.

His ignorance was as remarkable as his knowledge. Of contemporary literature, philosophy, and politics he appeared to know next to nothing. Upon my quoting Thomas Carlyle, he inquired in the naivest way who he might be and what he had done. My surprise reached a climax, however, when I found incidentally that he was ignorant of the Copernican theory and of the composition of the solar system. That any civilized human being in this nineteenth century should not be aware that the earth traveled round the sun appeared to be to me such an extraordinary fact that I could hardly realize it.

"You appear to be astonished," he said, smiling at my expression of surprise. "Now that I do know it, I shall do my best to forget it."

"To forget it!"

"You see," he explained, "I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of others things, so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now, the skilful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large

assortment, and all in the most perfect order. It is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent. Depend upon it, there comes a time when for every addition of knowledge you forget something that you knew before. It is of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones."

"But the solar system!" I protested.

"What the deuce is it to me?" he interrupted, impatiently; "you say that we go round the sun. If we went round the moon it would not make a pennyworth of difference to me or to my work."

I was on the point of asking him what that work might be, but something in his manner showed me that the question would be an unwelcome one. I pondered over our short conversation, however, and endeavored to draw my deductions from it. He said that he would acquire no knowledge which did not bear upon his object. Therefore all the knowledge which he possessed was such as would be useful to him. I enumerated in my own mind all the various points upon which he had shown me that he was exceptionally well informed. I even took a pencil and jotted them down. I could not help smiling at the document when I had completed it. It ran this way:

SHERLOCK HOLMES—his limits.

1. Knowledge of Literature—Nil.
2. " " Philosophy—Nil.
3. " " Astronomy—Nil.
4. " " Politics—Feeble.
5. " " Botany—Variable; well up in belladonna, opium, and poisons generally. Knows nothing of practical gardening.
6. " " Geology—Practical, but limited. Tells at a glance different soils from each other; after walks has shown me splashes upon his trousers, and told me by their color and consistency in what part of London he had received them.
7. " " Chemistry—Profound.
8. " " Anatomy—Accurate, but unsystematic.
9. " " Sensational Literature — Immense. He appears to know every detail of every horror perpetrated in the century.
10. Plays the violin well.
11. Is an expert single-stick player, boxer, and swordsman.
12. Has a good practical knowledge of British law.

When I had got so far in my list I threw it into the fire in despair.

"If I cannot find what the fellow is driving at by reconciling all these accomplishments, and discovering a calling which needs them all," I said to myself, "I may as well give up the attempt at once."

I see that I have alluded above to his powers upon the violin. These were very remarkable, but as eccentric as all his other accomplishments. That he could play pieces, and difficult pieces, I knew well, because at my request he has played me some of Mendelssohn's Lieder, and other favorites. When left to himself, however, he would seldom produce any music or attempt any recognized air.

Leaning back in his armchair of an evening, he would close his eyes and scrape carelessly at the fiddle, which was thrown across his knee. Sometimes the chords were sonorous and melancholy; occasionally they were fantastic and cheerful. Clearly they reflected the thoughts which possessed him, but whether the music aided those thoughts, or whether the playing was simply the result of a whim or fancy, was more than I could determine. I might have rebelled against these exasperating solos had it not been that he usually terminated them by playing in quick succession a whole series of my favorite airs, as a slight compensation for the trial upon my patience.

During the first week or so we had no callers, and I had begun to think that my companion was as friend-

less a man as I was myself. Presently, however, I found that he had many acquaintances, and those in the most different classes of society. There was one little sallow, rat-faced, dark-eyed fellow who was introduced to me as Mr. Lestrade, and who came three or four times in a single week. One morning a young girl called, fashionably dressed, and stayed for half an hour or more. The same afternoon brought a gray-headed, seedy visitor, looking like a Jew peddler, who appeared to me to be much excited, and who was closely followed by a slipshod elderly woman. On another occasion an old white-haired gentleman had an interview with my companion, and on another a railway porter in his velveteen uniform. When any of these nondescript individuals put in an appearance Sherlock Holmes used to beg for the use of the sitting-room, and I would retire to my bedroom. He always apologized to me for putting me to this inconvenience.

"I have to use this room as a place of business," he said, "and these people are my clients."

Again I had an opportunity of asking him a point-blank question, and again my delicacy prevented me from forcing another man to confide in me. I imagined at the time that he had some strong reason for not alluding to it, but he soon dispelled the idea by coming round to the subject of his own accord.

It was upon the 4th of March, as I have good reason to remember, that I rose somewhat earlier than usual, and found that Sherlock Holmes had not yet finished

his breakfast. The landlady had become so accustomed to my late habits that my place had not been laid nor my coffee prepared. With the unreasonable petulance of mankind I rang the bell and gave a curt intimation that I was ready. Then I picked up a magazine from the table and attempted to while away the time with it, while my companion munched silently at his toast. One of the articles had a pencil-mark at the heading, and I naturally began to run my eye through it.

Its somewhat ambitious title was "The Book of Life," and it attempted to show how much an observant man might learn by an accurate and systematic examination of all that came in his way. It struck me as being a remarkable mixture of shrewdness and absurdity. The reasoning was close and intense, but the deductions appeared to me to be far-fetched and exaggerated. The writer claimed by a momentary expression, a twitch of a muscle, or a glance of an eye, to fathom a man's inmost thoughts. Deceit, according to him, was an impossibility in the case of one trained to observation and analysis. His conclusions were as infallible as so many propositions of Euclid. So startling would his results appear to the uninitiated that, until they learned the processes by which he had arrived at them, they might well consider him as a necromancer.

"From a drop of water," said the writer, "a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara

without having seen or heard of one or the other. So all life is a great chain, the nature of which is known whenever we are shown a single link of it. Like all other arts, the Science of Deduction and Analysis is one which can only be acquired by long and patient study, nor is life long enough to allow any mortal to attain the highest possible perfection in it. Before turning to those moral and mental aspects of the matter which present the greatest difficulties, let the inquirer begin by mastering more elementary problems. Let him, on meeting a fellow-mortal, learn at a glance to distinguish the history of the man, and the trade or profession to which he belongs. Puerile as such an exercise may seem, it sharpens the faculties of observation and teaches one where to look and what to look for. By a man's finger-nails, by his coat-sleeve, by his boot, by his trouser-knees, by the callosities of his forefinger and thumb, by his expression, by his shirt-cuffs —by each of these things a man's calling is plainly revealed. That all united should fail to enlighten the competent inquirer in any case is almost inconceivable."

"What ineffable twaddle!" I cried, slapping the magazine down on the table; "I never read such rubbish in my life."

"What is it?" asked Sherlock Holmes.

"Why, this article," I said, pointing at it with my egg-spoon as I sat down to my breakfast. "I see that you have read it, since you have marked it. I don't

deny that it is smartly written. It irritates me, though. It is evidently the theory of some armchair lounger who evolves all these neat little paradoxes in the seclusion of his own study. It is not practical. I should like to see him clapped down in a third-class carriage on the Underground, and asked to give the trades of all his fellow-travelers. I would lay a thousand to one against him."

"You would lose your money," Sherlock Holmes remarked, calmly. "As for the article, I wrote it myself."

"You!"

"Yes; I have a turn both for observation and for deduction. The theories which I have expressed there, and which appear to you to be so chimerical, are really extremely practical—so practical that I depend upon them for my bread and cheese."

"And how?" I asked, involuntarily.

"Well, I have a trade of my own. I suppose I am the only one in the world. I'm a consulting detective, if you can understand what that is. Here in London we have lots of government detectives and lots of private ones. When these fellows are at fault they come to me, and I manage to put them on the right scent. They lay all the evidence before me, and I am generally able, by the help of my knowledge of the history of crime, to set them straight. There is a strong family resemblance about misdeeds, and if you have all the details of a thousand at your finger-ends, it is odd

if you can't unravel the thousand and first. Lestrade is a well-known detective. He got himself into a fog recently over a forgery case, and that was what brought him here."

"And these other people?"

"They are mostly sent out by private inquiry agencies. They are all people who are in trouble about something, and want a little enlightening. I listen to their story, they listen to my comments, and then I pocket my fee."

"But do you mean to say," I said, "that without leaving your room you can unravel some knot which other men can make nothing of, although they have seen every detail for themselves?"

"Quite so. I have a kind of intuition that way. Now and again a case turns up which is a little more complex. Then I have to bustle about and see things with my own eyes. You see, I have a lot of special knowledge which I apply to the problem, and which facilitates matters wonderfully. Those rules of deduction laid down in that article which aroused your scorn are invaluable to me in practical work. Observation with me is second nature. You appeared to be surprised when I told you, on our first meeting, that you had come from Afghanistan."

"You were told, no doubt."

"Nothing of the sort. I knew you came from Afghanistan. From long habit the train of thought ran so swiftly through my mind that I arrived at the con-

clusion without being conscious of intermediate steps. There were such steps, however. The train of reasoning ran: 'Here is a gentleman of a medical type, but with the air of a military man. Clearly an army doctor, then. He has just come from the tropics, for his face is dark, and that is not the natural tint of his skin, for his wrists are fair. He has undergone hardship and sickness, as his haggard face says clearly. His left arm has been injured. He holds it in a stiff and unnatural manner. Where in the tropics could an English army doctor have seen much hardship and got his arm wounded. Clearly in Afghanistan.' The whole train of thought did not occupy a second. I then remarked that you came from Afghanistan, and you were astonished."

"It is simple enough as you explain it," I said, smiling. "You remind me of Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin. I had no idea that such individuals did exist outside of stories."

Sherlock Holmes rose and lighted his pipe.

"No doubt you think that you are complimenting me in comparing me to Dupin," he observed. "Now, in my opinion, Dupin was a very inferior fellow. That trick of his of breaking in on his friends' thoughts with an apropos remark after a quarter of an hour's silence is really very showy and superficial. He had some analytical genius, no doubt; but he was by no means such a phenomenon as Poe appeared to imagine."

"Have you read Gaboriau's works?" I asked. "Does Lecoq come up to your idea of a detective?"

Sherlock Holmes sniffed sardonically.

"Lecoq was a miserable bungler," he said, in an angry voice; "he had only one thing to recommend him, and that was his energy. That book made me positively ill. The question was how to identify an unknown prisoner. I could have done it in twenty-four hours. Lecoq took six months or so. It might be made a text-book for detectives to teach them what to avoid."

I felt rather indignant at having two characters whom I had admired treated in this cavalier style. I walked over to the window, and stood looking out into the busy street.

"This fellow may be very clever," I said to myself, "but he is certainly very conceited."

"There are no crimes and no criminals in these days," he said, querulously. "What is the use of having brains in our profession? I know well that I have it in me to make my name famous. No man lives or has ever lived who has brought the same amount of study and of natural talent to the detection of crime which I have done. And what is the result? There is no crime to detect, or, at most, some bungling villainy with a motive so transparent that even a Scotland Yard official can see through it."

I was still annoyed at his bumptious style of conversation. I thought it best to change the topic.

"I wonder what that fellow is looking for?" I asked, pointing to a stalwart, plainly dressed individual who

was walking slowly down the other side of the street, looking anxiously at the numbers. He had a large blue envelope in his hand, and was evidently the bearer of a message.

"You mean the retired sergeant of marines," said Sherlock Holmes.

"Brag and bounce!" thought I to myself. "He knows that I cannot verify his guess."

The thought had hardly passed through my mind when the man whom we were watching caught sight of the number on our door, and ran rapidly across the roadway. We heard a loud knock, a deep voice below, and heavy steps ascending the stair.

"For Mr. Sherlock Holmes," he said, stepping into the room and handing my friend the letter.

Here was an opportunity of taking the conceit out of him. He little thought of this when he made that random shot.

"May I ask, my lad," I said, blandly, "what your trade may be?"

"Commissionaire, sir," he said, gruffly. "Uniform away for repairs."

"And you were?" I asked, with a slightly malicious glance at my companion.

"A sergeant, sir; Royal Marine Light Infantry, sir. No answer? Right, sir."

He clicked his heels together, raised his hand in a salute, and was gone.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAURISTON GARDENS MYSTERY.

I CONFESS that I was considerably startled by this fresh proof of the practical nature of my companion's theories. My respect for his powers of analysis increased wondrously. There still remained some lurking suspicion in my mind, however, that the whole thing was a prearranged episode, intended to dazzle me, though what earthly object he could have in taking me in was past my comprehension. When I looked at him he had finished reading the note, and his eyes had assumed the vacant, lack-lustre expression which showed mental abstraction.

"How in the world did you deduce that?" I asked.

"Deduce what?" said he, petulantly.

"Why, that he was a retired sergeant of marines."

"I have no time for trifles," he replied, brusquely; then, with a smile, "Excuse my rudeness. You broke the thread of my thoughts; but perhaps it is as well. So you actually were not able to see that that man was a sergeant of marines?"

"No, indeed."

"It was easier to know it than to explain why I know

it. If you were asked to prove that two and two made four, you might find some difficulty, and yet you are quite sure of the fact. Even across the street I could see a great blue anchor tattooed on the back of the fellow's hand. That smacked of the sea. He had a military carriage, however, and regulation side-whiskers. There we have the marine. He was a man with some amount of self-importance and a certain air of command. You must have observed the way in which he held his head and swung his cane. A steady, respectable, middle-aged man, too, on the face of him—all facts which led me to believe that he had been a sergeant."

"Wonderful!" I ejaculated.

"Commonplace," said Holmes, though I thought from his expression that he was pleased at my evident surprise and admiration. "I said just now that there were no criminals. It appears that I am wrong—look at this!" He threw me over the note which the commissionaire had brought.

"Why," I cried, as I cast my eye over it, "this is terrible!"

"It does seem to be a little out of the common," he remarked, calmly. "Would you mind reading it to me aloud?"

This is the letter which I read to him:

"My Dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes:

"There has been a bad business during the night at

3 Lauriston Gardens, off the Brixton road. Our man on the beat saw a light there about two in the morning, and, as the house was an empty one, suspected that something was amiss. He found the door open, and in the front room, which is bare of furniture, discovered the body of a gentleman, well dressed, and having cards in his pocket bearing the name of 'Enoch J. Drebber, Cleveland, Ohio, U. S. A.' There had been no robbery, nor is there any evidence as to how the man met his death. There are marks of blood in the room, but there is no wound upon his person. We are at a loss as to how he came into the empty house; indeed, the whole affair is a puzzler. If you can come round to the house any time before twelve, you will find me there. I have left everything 'in statu quo' until I hear from you. If you are unable to come I shall give you fuller details, and would esteem it a great kindness if you would favor me with your opinion.

"Yours faithfully,

"TOBIAS GREGSON."

"Gregson is the smartest of the Scotland Yarders," my friend remarked; "he and Lestrade are the pick of a bad lot. They are both quick and energetic, but conventional—shockingly so. They have their knives into each other, too. They are as jealous as a pair of professional beauties. There will be some fun over this case if they are both put upon the scent."

I was amazed at the calm way in which he rippled on.

"Surely there is not a moment to be lost," I cried; "shall I go and order you a cab?"

"I am not sure about whether I shall go. I am the most incurably lazy devil that ever stood in shoe-leather—that is, when the fit is on me, for I can be spry enough at times."

"Why, it is just such a chance as you have been longing for."

"My dear fellow, what does it matter to me? Supposing I unravel the whole matter, you may be sure that Gregson, Lestrade & Co. will pocket all the credit. That comes of being an unofficial personage."

"But he begs you to help him."

"Yes. He knows that I am his superior, and acknowledges it to me; but he would cut his tongue out before he would own it to any third person. However, we may as well go and have a look. I shall work it out on my own hook. I may have a laugh at them, if I have nothing else. Come on!"

He hustled on his overcoat, and bustled about in a way that showed that an energetic fit had superseded the apathetic one.

"Get your hat," he said.

"You wish me to come?"

"Yes, if you have nothing better to do."

A minute later we were both in a hansom, driving furiously for the Brixton road.

It was a foggy, cloudy morning, and a dun-colored veil hung over the house-tops, looking like the reflection of the mud-colored streets beneath. My companion was in the best of spirits, and prattled away about Cremona fiddles, and the difference between a Stradivarius and an Amati. As for myself, I was silent, for the dull weather and the melancholy business upon which we were engaged depressed my spirits.

"You don't seem to give much thought to the matter in hand," I said at last, interrupting Holmes' musical disquisition.

"No data yet," he answered. "It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment."

"You will have your data soon," I remarked, pointing with my finger; "this is the Brixton road, and that is the house, if I am not very much mistaken."

"So it is. Stop, driver, stop!" We were still a hundred yards or so from it, but he insisted upon our alighting, and we finished our journey upon foot.

No. 3 Lauriston Gardens wore an ill-omened and minatory look. It was one of four which stood back some little way from the street, two being occupied and two empty. The latter looked out with three tiers of vacant, melancholy windows, which were blank and dreary, save that here and there a "To Let" card had developed like a cataract upon the bleared panes. A small garden sprinkled over with a scattered eruption

of sickly plants separated each of these houses from the street, and was traversed by a narrow pathway, yellowish in color, and consisting apparently of a mixture of clay and gravel. The whole place was very sloppy from the rain which had fallen through the night. The garden was bounded by a three-foot brick wall, with a fringe of wood rails upon the top, and against this wall was leaning a stalwart police constable, surrounded by a small knot of loafers, who craned their necks and strained their eyes in the vain hope of catching some glimpse of the proceedings within.

I had imagined that Sherlock Holmes would at once have hurried into the house and plunged into a study of the mystery. Nothing appeared to be further from his intention. With an air of nonchalance which, under the circumstances, seemed to me to border upon affectation, he lounged up and down the pavement, and gazed vacantly at the ground, the sky, the opposite houses, and the line of railings. Having finished his scrutiny, he proceeded slowly down the path, or, rather, down the fringe of grass which flanked the path, keeping his eyes riveted upon the ground. Twice he stopped, and once I saw him smile and heard him utter an exclamation of satisfaction. There were many marks of footsteps upon the wet, clayey soil, but since the police had been coming and going over it I was unable to see how my companion could hope to learn anything from it. Still, I had had such extraordinary

evidence of the quickness of his perceptive faculties that I had no doubt that he could see a great deal which was hidden from me.

At the door of the house we were met by a tall, white-faced, flaxen-haired man, with a notebook in his hand, who rushed forward and wrung my companion's hand with effusion.

"It is indeed kind of you to come," he said; "I have had everything left untouched."

"Except that!" my friend answered, pointing to the pathway. "If a herd of buffaloes had passed along there could not be a greater mess. No doubt, however, you had drawn your own conclusions, Gregson, before you permitted this."

"I have had so much to do inside the house," the detective said, evasively. "My colleague, Mr. Lestrade, is here. I had relied upon him to look after this."

Holmes glanced at me, and raised his eyebrows sardonically.

"With two such men as yourself and Lestrade upon the ground, there will not be much for a third party to find out," he said.

Gregson rubbed his hands in a self-satisfied way.

"I think we have done all that can be done," he answered; "it's a queer case, though, and I knew your taste for such things."

"You did not come here in a cab?" asked Sherlock Holmes.

"No, sir."

"Nor Lestrade?"

"No, sir."

"Then let us go and look at the room."

With this inconsequent remark he strode on into the house, followed by Gregson, whose features expressed his astonishment.

A short passage, bare planked and dusty, led to the kitchen and offices. Two doors opened out of it to the left and to the right. One of these had obviously been closed for many weeks. The other belonged to the dining-room, which was the apartment in which the mysterious affair had occurred. Holmes walked in, and I followed him with that subdued feeling at my heart which the presence of death inspires.

It was a large, square room, looking all the larger for the absence of all furniture. A vulgar, flaring paper adorned the walls, but it was blotched in places with mildew, and here and there great strips had become detached and hung down, exposing the yellow plaster beneath. Opposite the door was a showy fireplace, surmounted by a mantelpiece of imitation white marble. On one corner of this was stuck the stump of a red wax candle. The solitary window was so dirty that the light was hazy and uncertain, giving a dull-gray tinge to everything, which was intensified by the thick layer of dust which coated the whole apartment.

All these details I observed afterward. At present my attention was centered upon the single grim, mo-

tionless figure which lay stretched upon the boards, with vacant, sightless eyes staring up at the discolored ceiling. It was that of a man about forty-three or forty-four years of age, middle-sized, broad-shouldered, with crisp, curling black hair, and a short, stubbly beard. He was dressed in a heavy broadcloth frock-coat and waistcoat, with light-colored trousers and immaculate collar and cuffs. A top-hat, well brushed and trim, was placed upon the floor beside him. His hands were clinched and his arms thrown abroad, while his lower limbs were interlocked, as though his death-struggle had been a grievous one. On his rigid face there stood an expression of horror, and, as it seemed to me, of hatred, such as I have never seen upon human features. This malignant and terrible contortion, combined with the low forehead, blunt nose, and prognathous jaw, gave the dead man a singularly simious and ape-like apearance, which was increased by his writhing, unnatural posture. I have seen death in many forms, but never has it appeared to me in a more fearsome aspect than in that dark, grimy apartment, which looked out upon one of the main arteries of suburban London. Lestrade, lean and ferret-like as ever, was standing by the doorway, and greeted my companion and myself.

"This case will make a stir, sir," he remarked. "It beats anything I have seen, and I am no chicken."

"There is no clew," said Gregson.

"None at all," chimed in Lestrade.

Sherlock Holmes approached the body, and, kneeling down, examined it intently.

"You are sure that there is no wound?" he asked, pointing to numerous gouts and splashes of blood which lay all around.

"Positive!" cried both detectives.

"Then, of course, this blood belongs to a second individual—presumably the murderer, if murder has been committed. It reminds me of the circumstances attendant on the death of Van Jansen, in Utrecht, in the year '34. Do you remember the case, Gregson?"

"No, sir."

"Read it up—you really should. There is nothing new under the sun. It has all been done before."

As he spoke his nimble fingers were flying here, there, and everywhere, feeling, pressing, unbuttoning, examining, while his eyes wore the same far-away expression which I have already remarked upon. So swiftly was the examination made that one would hardly have guessed the minuteness with which it was conducted. Finally he sniffed the dead man's lips, and then glanced at the soles of his patent-leather boots.

"He has not been moved at all?" he asked.

"No more than was necessary for the purpose of our examination."

"You can take him to the mortuary now," he said. "There is nothing more to be learned."

A VISIT FROM LESTRADE

—*A Study in Scarlet*

Gregson had a stretcher and four men at hand. At his call they entered the room, and the stranger was lifted and carried out. As they raised him a ring tinkled down and rolled across the floor. Lestrade grabbed it up and stared at it with mystified eyes.

"There's been a woman here," he cried. "It's a woman's wedding ring."

He held it out as he spoke upon the palm of his hand. We all gathered round him and gazed at it. There could be no doubt that that circle of plain gold had once adorned the finger of a bride.

"This complicates matters," said Gregson. "Heaven knows, they were complicated enough before!"

"You're sure it doesn't simplify them?" observed Holmes. "There's nothing to be learned by staring at it. What did you find in his pockets?"

"We have it all here," said Gregson, pointing to a litter of objects upon one of the bottom steps of the stairs. "A gold watch, No. 97,163, by Barraud, of London; gold Albert chain, very heavy and solid; gold ring, with Masonic device; gold pin, bulldog's head, with rubies as eyes; Russian-leather card-case, with cards of Enoch J. Drebber, of Cleveland, corresponding with the E. J. D. upon the linen; no purse, but loose money to the extent of seven pounds thirteen; pocket edition of Boccaccio's 'Decameron,' with name of Joseph Stangerson upon the fly-leaf; two letters, one addressed to E. J. Drebber and one to Joseph Stangerson."

"At what address?"

"American Exchange, Strand; to be left till called for. They are both from the Guion Steamship Company, and refer to the sailing of their boats from Liverpool. It is clear that this unfortunate man was about to return to New York."

"Have you made any inquiries as to this man Stangerson?"

"I did it at once, sir," said Gregson. "I have had advertisements sent to all the newspapers, and one of my men has gone to the American Exchange, but he has not returned yet."

"Have you sent to Cleveland?"

"We telegraphed this morning."

"How did you word your inquiries?"

"We simply detailed the circumstances, and said that we should be glad of any information which could help us."

"You did not ask for particulars on any point which appeared to you to be crucial?"

"I asked about Stangerson."

"Nothing else? Is there no circumstance on which this whole case appears to hinge? Will you not telegraph again?"

"I have said all I have to say," said Gregson, in an offended voice.

Sherlock Holmes chuckled to himself, and appeared to be about to make some remark, when Lestrade, who had been in the front room while we were holding this

conversation in the hall, reappeared upon the scene, rubbing his hands in a pompous and self-satisfied manner.

"Mr. Gregson," he said, "I have just made a discovery of the highest importance, and one which would have been overlooked had I not made a careful examination of the walls."

The little man's eyes sparkled as he spoke, and he was evidently in a state of suppressed exultation at having scored a point against his colleague.

"Come here," he said, bustling back into the room, the atmosphere of which felt cleaner since the removal of its ghastly inmate. "Now, stand there!"

He struck a match on his boot and held it up against the wall.

"Look at that!" he said, triumphantly.

I have remarked that the paper had fallen away in parts. In this particular corner of the room a large piece had peeled off, leaving a yellow square of coarse plastering. Across this bare space there was scrawled in blood-red letters a single word:

RACHE.

"What do you think of that?" cried the detective, with the air of a showman exhibiting his show. "This was overlooked because it was in the darkest corner of the room, and no one thought of looking there. The murderer has written it with his or her own blood. See

this smear where it has trickled down the wall! That disposes of the idea of suicide, anyhow. Why was that corner chosen to write it on? I will tell you. See that candle on the mantelpiece? It was lighted at the time, and if it was lighted this corner would be the brightest instead of the darkest portion of the wall."

"And what does it mean, now that you *have* found it?" asked Gregson, in a depreciatory voice.

"Mean? Why, it means that the writer was going to put the female name Rachel, but was disturbed before he or she had time to finish. You mark my words, when this case comes to be cleared up you will find that a woman named Rachel has something to do with it. It's all very well for you to laugh, Mr. Sherlock Holmes. You may be very smart and clever, but the old hound is the best, when all is said and done."

"I really beg your pardon," said my companion, who had ruffled the little man's temper by bursting into an explosion of laughter. "You certainly have the credit of being the first of us to find this out, and, as you say, it bears every mark of having been written by the other participant in last night's mystery. I have not had time to examine this room yet, but with your permission I shall do so now."

As he spoke he whipped a tape-measure and a large, round magnifying glass from his pocket. With these two implements he trotted noiselessly about the room, sometimes stopping, occasionally kneeling, and once lying flat upon his face. So engrossed was he with his

occupation that he appeared to have forgotten our presence, for he chattered away to himself under his breath the whole time, keeping up a running fire of exclamations, groans, whistles, and little cries suggestive of encouragement and of hope. As I watched him I was irresistibly reminded of a pure-blooded, well-trained foxhound as it dashes backward and forward through the covert, whining in its eagerness, until it comes across the lost scent. For twenty minutes or more he continued his researches, measuring with the most exact care the distance between marks which were entirely invisible to me, and occasionally applying his tape to the walls in an equally incomprehensible manner. In one place he gathered very carefully a little pile of gray dust from the floor, and packed it away in an envelope. Finally he examined with his glass the word upon the wall, going over every letter of it with the most minute exactness. This done, he appeared to be satisfied, for he replaced his tape and his glass in his pocket.

"They say that genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains," he remarked, with a smile. "It's a very bad definition, but it does apply to detective work."

Gregson and Lestrade had watched the manœuvres of their amateur companion with considerable curiosity and some contempt. They evidently failed to appreciate the fact, which I had begun to realize, that Sherlock Holmes' smallest actions were all directed toward some definite and practical end.

"What do you think of it, sir?" they both asked.

"It would be robbing you of the credit of the case if I were to presume to help you," remarked my friend. "You are doing so well now that it would be a pity for any one to interfere." There was a world of sarcasm in his voice as he spoke. "If you will let me know how your investigations go," he continued, "I shall be happy to give you any help I can. In the meantime I should like to speak to the constable who found the body. Can you give me his name and address?"

Lestrade glanced at his notebook.

"John Rance," he said. "He's off duty now. You will find him at 46 Audley Court, Kennington Park Gate."

Holmes took a note of the address. "Come along, doctor," he said; "we shall go and look him up. I'll tell you one thing which may help you in the case," he continued, turning to the two detectives. "There has been murder done, and the murderer was a man. He was more than six feet high, was in the prime of life, had small feet for his height, wore coarse, square-toed boots, and smoked a Trichinopoly cigar. He came here with his victim in a four-wheeled cab, which was drawn by a horse with three old shoes, and one new one on his off fore-leg. In all probability the murderer had a florid face, and the finger nails of his right hand were remarkably long. These are only a few indications, but they may assist you."

Lestrade and Gregson glanced at each other with an incredulous smile.

"If this man was murdered, how was it done?" asked the former.

"Poison," said Sherlock Holmes, curtly, and strode off. "One other thing, Lestrade," he added, turning round at the door: "'Rache' is the German for 'revenge'; so don't lose your time looking for Miss Rachel."

With which Parthian shot he walked away, leaving the two rivals open-mouthed behind him.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT JOHN RANCE HAD TO TELL.

It was one o'clock when we left No. 3 Lauriston Gardens. Sherlock Holmes led me to the nearest telegraph office, whence he dispatched a long telegram. He then hailed a cab, and ordered the driver to take us to the address given us by Lestrade.

"There is nothing like first-hand evidence," he remarked; "as a matter of fact, my mind is entirely made up upon the case, but still we may as well learn all that is to be learned."

"You amaze me, Holmes," said I. "Surely you are not as sure as you pretend to be of all those particulars which you gave."

"There's no room for a mistake," he answered. "The very first thing which I observed on arriving there was that a cab had made two ruts with its wheels close to the curb. Now, up to last night, we have had no rain for a week, so that those wheels, which left such a deep impression, must have been there during the night. There were the marks of a horse's hoofs, too, the outline of one of which was far more clearly

cut than that of the other three, showing that that was a new shoe. Since the cab was there after the rain began, and was not there at any time during the morning—I have Gregson's word for it—it follows that it must have been there during the night, and, therefore, that it brought those two individuals to the house."

"That seems simple enough," said I; "but how about the other man's height?"

"Why, the height of a man, in nine cases out of ten, can be told from the length of his stride. It is a simple calculation enough, though there is no use my boring you with figures. I had this fellow's stride, both on the clay outside and on the dust within. Then I had a way of checking my calculation. When a man writes on a wall, his instinct leads him to write about the level of his own eyes. Now, that writing was just over six feet from the ground. It was child's play."

"And his age?" I asked.

"Well, if a man can stride four and a half feet without the smallest effort, he can't be quite in the sere and yellow. That was the breadth of a puddle on the garden walk which he had evidently walked across. Patent-leather boots had gone round and Square-toes had hopped over. There is no mystery about it at all. I am simply applying to ordinary life a few of those precepts of observation and deduction which I advocated in that article. Is there anything else that puzzles you?"

"The finger nails and the Trichinopoly," I suggested.

"The writing on the wall was done with a man's forefinger dipped in blood. My glass allowed me to observe that the plaster was slightly scratched in doing it, which would not have been the case if the man's nail had been trimmed. I gathered up some scattered ashes from the floor. It was dark in color and flaky—such an ash as is only made by a Trichinopoly. I have made a special study of cigar ashes—in fact, I have written a monograph upon the subject. I flatter myself that I can distinguish at a glance the ash of any known brand either of cigar or tobacco. It is in just such details that the skilled detective differs from the Gregson and Lestrade type."

"And the florid face?" I asked.

"Ah, that was a more daring shot, though I have no doubt that I was right. You must not ask me that at the present state of the affair."

I passed my hand over my brow.

"My head is in a whirl," I remarked; "the more one thinks of it, the more mysterious it grows. How came these two men—if there were two men—into an empty house? What has become of the cabman who drove them? How could one man compel another to take poison? Where did the blood come from? What was the object of the murderer, since robbery had no part in it? How came the woman's ring there? Above all, why should the second man write up the German

word 'Rache' before decamping? I confess that I cannot see any possible way of reconciling these facts."

My companion smiled approvingly.

"You sum up the difficulties of the situation succinctly and well," he said. "There is much that is still obscure, though I have quite made up my mind on the main facts. As to poor Lestrade's discovery, it was simply a blind intended to put the police upon a wrong track, by suggesting socialism and secret societies. It was not done by a German. The A, if you noticed, was printed somewhat after the German fashion. Now, a real German invariably prints in the Latin character, so that we may safely say that this was not written by one, but by a clumsy imitator, who overdid his part. It was simply a ruse, to divert inquiry into a wrong channel. I'm not going to tell you much more of the case, doctor. You know a conjuror gets no credit when once he has explained his trick, and if I show you too much of my method of working, you will come to the conclusion that I am a very ordinary individual after all."

"I shall never do that," I answered; "you have brought detection as near an exact science as it ever will be brought in this world."

My companion flushed up with pleasure at my words and the earnest way in which I uttered them. I had already observed that he was as sensitive to flattery on the score of his art as any girl could be of her beauty.

"I'll tell you one other thing," he said. "Patent-

leathers and Square-toes came in the same cab, and they walked down the pathway together as friendly as possible—arm-in-arm, in all probability. When they got inside they walked up and down the room—or, rather, Patent-leathers stood still, while Square-toes walked up and down. I could read all that in the dust; and I could read that, as he walked, he grew more and more excited. That is shown by the increased length of his strides. He was talking all the while, and working himself up, no doubt, into a fury. Then the tragedy occurred. I've told you all I know myself, now, for the rest is mere surmise and conjecture. We have a good working basis, however, on which to start. We must hurry up, for I want to go to Halle's concert, to hear Norman Neruda, this afternoon."

This conversation had occurred while our cab had been threading its way through a long succession of dingy streets and dreary by-ways. In the dingiest and dreariest of them our driver suddenly came to a stand.

"That's Audley Court in there," he said, pointing to a narrow slit in the line of a dead-colored brick. "You'll find me here when you come back."

Audley Court was not an attractive locality. The narrow passage led us into a quadrangle paved with flags and lined by sordid dwellings. We picked our way among groups of dirty children and through lines of discolored linen until we came to No. 46, the door of which was decorated with a small slip of brass, on

which the name Rance was engraved. On inquiry we found that the constable was in bed, and we were shown into a little front parlor to await his coming.

He appeared presently, looking a little irritable at being disturbed in his slumbers.

"I made my report at the office," he said.

Holmes took a half-sovereign from his pocket and played with it pensively.

"We thought that we should like to hear it all from your own lips," he said.

"I shall be most happy to tell you anything I can," the constable answered, with his eyes upon the little golden disk.

"Just let me hear it all in your own way, as it occurred."

Rance sat down on the horse-hair sofa and knitted his brows, as though determined not to omit anything in his narrative.

"I'll tell it ye from the beginning," he said. "My time is from ten at night to six in the morning. At eleven there was a fight at the White Hart; but, bar that, all was quiet enough on the beat. At one o'clock it began to rain, and I met Harry Murcher—him who has the Holland Grove beat—and we stood together at the corner of Henrietta Street a-talkin'. Presently —maybe about two, or a little after—I thought I would take a look round, and see that all was right down the Brixton Road. It was precious dirty and lonely. Not a soul did I meet all the way down,

though a cab or two went past me. I was a-strollin' down, thinkin', between ourselves, how uncommon handy a four of gin hot would be, when suddenly a glint of light caught my eye in the window of that same house. Now, I knew that them two houses in Lauriston Gardens was empty on account of him that owns them, who won't have the drains seed to, though the very last tenant what lived in one of them died o' typhoid fever. I was knocked all in a heap, therefore, at seeing a light in the window, and I suspected as something was wrong. When I got to the door"——

"You stopped, and then walked back to the garden gate," my companion interrupted. "What did you do that for?"

Rance gave a violent jump, and stared at Sherlock Holmes, with the utmost amazement upon his features.

"Why, that's true, sir," he said; "though how you come to know it, Heaven only knows! Ye see, when I got up to the door, it was so still and so lonesome that I thought I'd be none the worse for some one with me. I ain't afeard of anything on this side o' the grave; but I thought that maybe it was him that died o' the typhoid, inspecting the drains what killed him. The thought gave me a kind o' turn, and I walked back to the gate to see if I could see Murcher's lantern, but there wasn't no sign of him nor of any one else."

"There was no one in the street?"

"Not a livin' soul, sir, nor as much as a dog. Then I pulled myself together and went back and pushed

the door open. All was quiet inside, so I went into the room where the light was a-burnin'. There was a candle flickerin' on the mantelpiece—a red wax one—and by its light I saw"——

"Yes, I know all that you saw. You walked round the room several times, and you knelt down by the body, and then you walked through and tried the kitchen door, and then"——

John Rance sprang to his feet with a frightened face and suspicion in his eyes.

"Where was you hid to see all that?" he cried. "It seems to me that you knows a deal more than you should."

Holmes laughed, and threw his card across the table to the constable.

"Don't get arresting me for the murder," he said. "I am one of the hounds, and not the wolf; Mr. Gregson or Mr. Lestrade will answer for that. Go on, though. What did you do next?"

Rance resumed his seat, without, however, losing his mystified expression.

"I went back to the gate and sounded my whistle. That brought Murcher and two more to the spot."

"Was the street empty then?"

"Well, it was, as far as anybody that could be of any good goes."

"What do you mean?"

The constable's features broadened into a grin.

"I've seen many a drunk chap in my time," he said, "but never any one so cryin' drunk as that cove. He was at the gate when I came out, a-leanin' up agin the railin's and a-singin' at the pitch of his lungs about Columbine's new-fangled banner, or some such stuff. He couldn't stand, far less help."

"What sort of a man was he?" asked Sherlock Holmes.

John Rance appeared to be somewhat irritated at this digression.

"He was an uncommon drunk sort o' man," he said. "He'd ha' found hisself in the station if we hadn't been so took up."

"His face—his dress—didn't you notice them?" Holmes broke in, impatiently.

"I should think I did notice them, seeing that I had to prop him up—me and Murcher between us. He was a long chap, with a red face, the lower part muffled round"——

"That will do," cried Holmes. "What became of him?"

"We'd enough to do without lookin' after him," the policeman said, in an aggrieved voice. "I'll wager he found his way home all right."

"How was he dressed?"

"A brown overcoat."

"Had he a whip in his hand?"

"A whip? no."

"He must have left it behind," muttered my companion. "You didn't happen to see or hear a cab after that?"

"No."

"There's a half-sovereign for you," my companion said, standing up and taking his hat. "I am afraid, Rance, that you will never rise in the force. That head of yours should be for use as well as ornament. You might have gained your sergeant's stripes last night. The man whom you held in your hands is the man who holds the clue of this mystery, and whom we are seeking. There is no use of arguing about it now; I tell you that it is so. Come along, doctor."

We started off for the cab together, leaving our informant incredulous, but obviously uncomfortable.

"The blundering fool!" Holmes said, bitterly, as we drove back to our lodgings. "Just to think of his having such an incomparable bit of good luck, and not taking advantage of it."

"I am rather in the dark still. It is true that the description of this man tallies with your idea of the second party in this mystery. But why should he come back to the house after leaving it? This is not the way of criminals."

"The ring, man, the ring; that was what he came back for. If we have no other way of catching him, we can always bait our line with the ring. I shall have him, doctor—I'll lay you two to one that I have him. I must thank you for it all; I might not have

gone but for you, and so have missed the finest study I ever came across—a study in scarlet, eh? Why shouldn't we use a little art jargon? There's the scarlet thread of murder running through the colorless skein of life, and our duty is to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it. And now for lunch, and then for Norman Neruda. Her attack and her bowing are splendid. What's that little thing of Chopin's she plays so magnificently: Tra-la-la-lira-lira-lay."

Leaning back in the cab, this amateur bloodhound caroled away like a lark, while I meditated upon the many-sidedness of the human mind.

CHAPTER V.

OUR ADVERTISEMENT BRINGS A VISITOR.

Our morning's exertions had been too much for my weak health, and I was tired out in the afternoon. After Holmes' departure for the concert I lay down upon the sofa and endeavored to get a couple of hours' sleep. It was a useless attempt. My mind had been too much excited by all that had occurred, and the strangest fancies and surmises crowded into it. Every time that I closed my eyes I saw before me the distorted, baboon-like countenance of the murdered man. So sinister was the impression which that face produced upon me that I found it difficult to feel anything but gratitude for him who had removed its owner from the world. If ever human features bespoke vice of the most malignant type, they were certainly those of Enoch J. Drebber, of Cleveland. Still, I recognized that justice must be done, and that the depravity of the victim was no condonement in the eyes of the law.

The more I thought of it the more extraordinary did my companion's hypothesis, that the man had been

poisoned, appear. I remembered how he had sniffed his lips, and had no doubt that he had detected something which had given rise to the idea. Then, again, if not poison, what had caused the man's death, since there was neither wound nor marks of strangulation? But, on the other hand, whose blood was that which lay so thickly upon the floor? There were no signs of a struggle, nor had the victim any weapon with which he might have wounded an antagonist. As long as all these questions were unsolved I felt that sleep would be no easy matter, either for Holmes or myself. His quiet, self-confident manner convinced me that he had already formed a theory which explained all the facts, though what it was I could not for an instant conjecture.

He was very late in returning—so late that I knew that the concert could not have detained him all the time. Dinner was on the table before he appeared.

"It was magnificent," he said, as he took his seat. "Do you remember what Darwin says about music? He claims that the power of producing and appreciating it existed among the human race long before the power of speech was arrived at. Perhaps that is why we are so subtly influenced by it. There are vague memories in our souls of those misty centuries when the world was in its childhood."

"That's rather a broad idea," I remarked.

"One's ideas must be as broad as Nature if they are to interpret Nature," he answered. "What's the mat-

ter? You're not looking quite yourself. This Brixton Road affair has upset you."

"To tell the truth, it has," I said. "I ought to be more case-hardened after my Afghan experiences. I saw my own comrades hacked to pieces at Maiwand without losing my nerve."

"I can understand. There is a mystery about this which stimulates the imagination; where there is no imagination there is no horror. Have you seen the evening paper?"

"No."

"It gives a fairly good account of the affair. It does not mention the fact that when the man was raised up a woman's wedding ring fell upon the floor. It is just as well it does not."

"Why?"

"Look at this advertisement," he answered. "I had one sent to every paper this morning immediately after the affair."

He threw the paper across to me, and I glanced at the place indicated. It was the first announcement in the "Found" column.

"In Brixton Road," it ran, "a plain gold wedding ring, found in the roadway between the White Hart Tavern and Holland Grove. Apply Dr. Watson, 221B Baker Street, between eight and nine this evening."

"Excuse my using your name," he said. "If I used

my own some one of these dunderheads would recognize it, and want to meddle in the affair."

"That is all right," I answered. "But supposing any one applies, I have no ring."

"Oh, yes, you have," said he, handing me one. "This will do very well. It is almost a fac-simile."

"And who do you expect will answer this advertisement?"

"Why, the man in the brown coat—our florid friend with the square toes. If he does not come himself he will send an accomplice."

"Would he not consider it as too dangerous?"

"Not at all. If my view of the case is correct, and I have every reason to believe that it is, this man would rather risk anything than lose the ring. According to my notion he dropped it while stooping over Drebber's body, and did not miss it at the time. After leaving the house he discovered his loss, and hurried back, but found the police already in possession, owing to his own folly in leaving the candle burning. He had to pretend to be drunk in order to allay the suspicions which might have been aroused by his appearance at the gate. Now, put yourself in that man's place. On thinking the matter over, it must have occurred to him that it was possible that he had lost the ring in the road after leaving the house. What would he do then? He would eagerly look out for the evening paper, in the hope of seeing it among the articles found. His

eye, of course, would light upon this. He would be overjoyed. Why should he fear a trap? There would be no reason in his eyes why the finding of the ring should be connected with the murder. He would come. He will come. You shall see him within an hour."

"And then?" I asked.

"Oh, you can leave me to deal with him then. Have you any arms?"

"I have my old service revolver and a few cartridges."

"You had better clean it and load it. He will be a desperate man, and, though I shall take him unawares, it is as well to be ready for anything."

I went to my bedroom and followed his advice. When I returned with the pistol the table had been cleared, and Holmes was engaged in his favorite occupation of scraping upon his violin.

"The plot thickens," he said, as I entered. "I have just had an answer to my American telegram. My view of the case is the correct one."

"And that is?" I asked, eagerly.

"My fiddle would be the better for new strings," he remarked. "Put your pistol in your pocket. When the fellow comes, speak to him in an ordinary way. Leave the rest to me. Don't frighten him by looking at him too hard."

"It is eight o'clock now," I said, glancing at my watch.

"Yes. He will probably be here in a few minutes. Open the door slightly. That will do. Now put the key on the inside. Thank you! This is a queer old book I picked up at a stall yesterday—'De Jure inter Gentes'—published in Latin at Liege in the Lowlands, in 1642. Charles' head was still firm on his shoulders when this little brown-backed volume was struck off."

"Who is the printer?"

"Philippe de Croy, whoever he may have been. On the fly-leaf, in very faded ink, is written, 'Ex libris Guliolmi Whyte.' I wonder who William Whyte was? Some pragmatical seventeenth century lawyer, I suppose. His writing has a legal twist about it. Here comes our man, I think."

As he spoke there was a sharp ring at the bell. Sherlock Holmes rose softly and moved his chair in the direction of the door. We heard the servant pass along the hall, and the sharp click of the latch as she opened it.

"Does Dr. Watson live here?" asked a clear, but rather harsh voice. We could not hear the servant's reply, but the door closed, and some one began to ascend the stairs. The footfall was an uncertain and shuffling one. A look of surprise passed over the face of my companion as he listened to it. It came slowly along the passage, and there was a feeble tap at the door.

"Come in!" I cried.

At my summons, instead of the man of violence

FINALLY HE EXAMINED WITH HIS GLASS THE WORD UPON THE WALL.
—*A Study in Scarlet*

whom we expected, a very old and wrinkled woman hobbled into the apartment. She appeared to be dazzled by the sudden blaze of light, and, after dropping a curtsey, she stood blinking at us with her bleared eyes and fumbling in her pocket with nervous, shaky fingers. I glanced at my companion, and his face had assumed such a disconsolate expression that it was all I could do to keep my countenance. The old crone drew out an evening paper, and pointed at our advertisement.

"It's this as has brought me, good gentlemen," she said, dropping another curtsey; "a gold wedding ring in the Brixton Road. It belongs to my girl Sally, as was married only this time twelvemonth, which her husband is a steward aboard a Union boat, and what he'd say if he come 'ome and found her without her ring is more than I can think, he being short enough at the best o' times, but more especially when he has the drink. If it please you, she went to the circus last night along with"——

"Is that her ring?" I asked.

"The Lord be thanked!" cried the old woman. "Sally will be a glad woman this night. That's the ring."

"And what may your address be?" I inquired, taking up a pencil.

"13 Duncan Street, Houndsditch. A weary way from here."

"The Brixton Road does not lie between any circus and Houndsditch," said Sherlock Holmes, sharply.

The old woman faced round and looked keenly at him from her little red-rimmed eyes.

"The gentleman asked me for *my* address," she said. "Sally lives in lodgings at 3 Mayfield Place, Peckham."

"And your name is"——

"My name is Sawyer—hers is Dennis, which Tom Dennis married her—and a smart, clean lad, too, as long as he's at sea, and no steward in the company more thought of; but when on shore, what with the women and what with liquor-shops"——

"Here is your ring, Mrs. Sawyer," I interrupted, in obedience to a sign from my companion; "it clearly belongs to your daughter, and I am glad to be able to restore it to the rightful owner."

With many mumbled blessings and protestations of gratitude the old crone packed it away in her pocket, and shuffled off down the stairs. Sherlock Holmes sprang to his feet the moment she was gone and rushed into his room. He returned in a few seconds enveloped in an ulster and a cravat.

"I'll follow her," he said, hurriedly; "she must be an accomplice, and will lead me to him. Wait up for me."

The hall door had hardly slammed behind our visitor before Holmes had descended the stair. Looking

through the window, I could see her walking feebly along the other side, while her pursuer dogged her some little distance behind.

"Either his whole theory is incorrect," I thought to myself, "or else he will be led now to the heart of the mystery."

There was no need for him to ask me to wait up for him, for I felt that sleep was impossible until I heard the result of his adventure.

It was close upon nine when he set out. I had no idea how long he might be, but I sat stolidly puffing at my pipe and skipping over the pages of Henri Murger's "Vie de Boheme." Ten o'clock passed, and I heard the footsteps of the maids as they pattered off to bed. Eleven, and the more stately tread of the landlady passed by my door, bound for the same destination. It was close upon twelve before I heard the sharp sound of his latch-key. The instant he entered I saw by his face that he had not been successful. Amusement and chagrin seemed to be struggling for the mastery, until the former suddenly carried the day, and he burst into a hearty laugh.

"I wouldn't have the Scotland Yarders know it for the world," he cried, dropping into his chair; "I have chaffed them so much that they would never have let me hear the end of it. I can afford to laugh, because I know that I will be even with them in the long run."

"What is it, then?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't mind telling a story against myself.

That creature had gone a little way when she began to limp and show every sign of being footsore. Presently she came to a halt, and hailed a four-wheeler which was passing. I managed to be close to her so as to hear the address, but I need not have been so anxious, for she sung it out loud enough to be heard at the other side of the street, 'Drive to 13 Duncan Street, Houndsditch,' she cried. This begins to look genuine, I thought, and, having seen her safely inside, I perched myself behind. That's an art which every detective should be an expert at. Well, away we rattled, and never drew rein until we reached the street in question. I hopped off before we came to the door, and strolled down the street in an easy, lounging way. I saw the cab pull up. The driver jumped down, and I saw him open the door and stand expectantly. Nothing came out, though. When I reached him he was groping about frantically in the empty cab, and giving vent to the finest assorted collection of oaths that ever I listened to. There was no sign or trace of his passenger, and I fear it will be some time before he gets his fare. On inquiring at No. 13 I found that the house belonged to a respectable paper-hanger named Keswick, and that no one of the name either of Sawyer or Dennis had ever been heard of there."

"You don't mean to say," I cried in amazement, "that that tottering, feeble old woman was able to get out of the cab while it was in motion, without either you or the driver seeing her?"

"Old woman be d——d!" said Sherlock Holmes, sharply. "We were the old women, to be so taken in. It must have been a young man, and an active one, too, besides being an incomparable actor. The get-up was inimitable. He saw that he was followed, no doubt, and used this means of giving me the slip. It shows that the man we are after is not as lonely as I imagined he was, but has friends who are ready to risk something for him. Now, doctor, you are looking done up. Take my advice and turn in."

I was certainly feeling very weary, so I obeyed his injunction. I left Holmes seated in front of the smoldering fire, and long into the watches of the night I heard the low, melancholy wailings of his violin, and knew that he was still pondering over the strange problem which he had set himself to unravel.

CHAPTER VI.

TOBIAS GREGSON SHOWS WHAT HE CAN DO.

THE papers next day were full of the "Brixton Mystery," as they termed it. Each had a long account of the affair, and some had leaders upon it in addition. There was some information in them which was new to me. I still retain in my scrap-book numerous clippings and extracts bearing upon the case. Here is a condensation of a few of them:

The "Daily Telegraph" remarked that in the history of crime there had seldom been a tragedy which presented stranger features. The German name of the victim, the absence of all other motive, and the sinister inscription on the wall, all pointed to its perpetration by political refugees and revolutionists. The Socialists had many branches in America, and the deceased had, no doubt, infringed their unwritten laws and been tracked down by them. After alluding airily to the Vehmgericht, aqua tofana, Carbonari, the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, the Darwinian theory, the principles of Malthus, and the Ratcliff Highway mur-

ders, the article concluded by admonishing the government and advocating a closer watch over foreigners in England.

The "Standard" commented upon the fact that lawless outrages of the sort usually occurred under a Liberal administration. They arose from the unsettling of the minds of the masses, and the consequent weakening of all authority. The deceased was an American gentleman who had been residing for some weeks in the metropolis. He had stayed at the boarding-house of Mme. Charpentier, in Torquay Terrace, Camberwell. He was accompanied in his travels by his private secretary, Mr. Joseph Stangerson. The two bid adieu to their landlady upon Tuesday, the 4th inst., and departed to Euston Station with the avowed intention of catching the Liverpool express. They were afterward seen together on the platform. Nothing more is known of them until Mr. Drebber's body was, as recorded, discovered in an empty house in the Brixton Road, many miles from Euston. How he came there, or how he met his fate, are questions which are still involved in mystery. Nothing is known of the whereabouts of Stangerson. We are glad to learn that Mr. Lestrade and Mr. Gregson, of Scotland Yard, are both engaged upon the case, and it is confidently anticipated that these well-known officers will speedily throw light upon the matter.

The "Daily News" observed that there was no doubt as to the crime being a political one. The despotism

and hatred of Liberalism which animated the Continental governments had had the effect of driving to our shores a number of men who might have made excellent citizens were they not soured by the recollection of all that they had undergone. Among these men there was a stringent code of honor, any infringement of which was punished by death. Every effort should be made to find the secretary, Stangerson, and to ascertain some particulars of the habits of the deceased. A great step had been gained by the discovery of the address of the house at which he had boarded —a result which was entirely due to the acuteness and energy of Mr. Gregson, of Scotland Yard.

Sherlock Holmes and I read these notices over together at breakfast, and they appeared to afford him considerable amusement.

"I told you that, whatever happened, Lestrade and Gregson would be sure to score."

"That depends on how it turns out."

"Oh, bless you, it doesn't matter in the least. If the man is caught, it will be on *account* of their exertions; if he escapes, it will be *in spite* of their exertions. It's heads I win and tails you lose. Whatever they do, they will have followers. '*Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire.*' "

"What on earth is this?" I cried, for at this moment there came the pattering of many steps in the hall and on the stairs, accompanied by audible expressions of disgust upon the part of our landlady.

"It's the Baker Street division of the detective police force," said my companion, gravely; and as he spoke there rushed into the room half a dozen of the dirtiest and most ragged street arabs that ever I clapped eyes on.

"'Tention!" cried Holmes, in a sharp tone, and the six dirty little scoundrels stood in a line like so many disreputable statuettes. "In future you shall send up Wiggins alone to report, and the rest of you must wait in the street. Have you found it, Wiggins?"

"No, sir, we hain't," said one of the youths.

"I hardly expected you would. You must keep on until you do. Here are your wages." He handed each of them a shilling. "Now, off you go, and come back with a better report next time."

He waved his hand, and they scampered away down stairs like so many rats, and we heard their shrill voices next moment in the street.

"There's more work to be got out of one of those little beggars than out of a dozen of the force," Holmes remarked. "The mere sight of an official-looking person seals men's lips. These youngsters, however, go everywhere and hear everything. They are as sharp as needles, too; all they want is organization."

"Is it on this Brixton case that you are employing them?" I asked.

"Yes; there is a point which I wish to ascertain. It is merely a matter of time. Halloo! we are going to

hear some news now with a vengeance! Here is Gregson coming down the road, with beatitude written upon every feature of his face. Bound for us, I know. Yes, he is stopping. There he is!"

There was a violent peal at the bell, and in a few seconds the fair-haired detective came up the stairs, three steps at a time, and burst into our sitting-room.

"My dear fellow," he cried, wringing Holmes' unresponsive hand, "congratulate me! I have made the whole thing as clear as day!"

A shade of anxiety seemed to me to cross my companion's expressive face.

"Do you mean that you are on the right track?" he asked.

"The right track! Why, sir, we have the man under lock and key!"

"And his name is?"

"Arthur Charpentier, sub-lieutenant in Her Majesty's navy," cried Gregson, pompously rubbing his fat hands and inflating his chest.

Sherlock Holmes gave a sigh of relief and relaxed into a smile.

"Take a seat and try one of these cigars," he said. "We are anxious to know how you managed it. Will you have some whiskey and water?"

"I don't mind if I do," the detective answered. "The tremendous exertions which I have gone through during the last day or two have worn me out. Not so

much bodily exertion, you understand, as the strain upon the mind. You will appreciate that, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, for we are both brain-workers."

"You do me too much honor," said Holmes, gravely. "Let us hear how you arrived at this most gratifying result."

The detective seated himself in the armchair and puffed complacently at his cigar. Then suddenly he slapped his thigh in a paroxysm of amusement.

"The fun of it is," he cried, "that that fool Lestrade, who thinks himself so smart, has gone off upon the wrong track altogether. He is after the secretary, Stangerson, who had no more to do with the crime than the babe unborn. I have no doubt that he has caught him by this time."

The idea tickled Gregson so much that he laughed until he choked.

"And how did you get your clue?"

"Ah, I'll tell you all about it. Of course, Dr. Watson, this is strictly between ourselves. The first difficulty which we had to contend with was the finding of this American's antecedents. Some people would have waited until their advertisements were answered, or until parties came forward and volunteered information. That is not Tobias Gregson's way of going to work. You remember the hat beside the dead man?"

"Yes," said Holmes; "by John Underwood & Sons, 229 Camberwell Road."

Gregson looked quite crestfallen.

"I had no idea that you noticed that," he said. "Have you been there?"

"No."

"Ha!" cried Gregson, in a relieved voice; "you should never neglect a chance, however small it may seem."

"To a great mind nothing is little," remarked Holmes, sententiously.

"Well, I went to Underwood, and asked him if he had sold a hat of that size and description. He looked over his books, and came on it at once. He had sent the hat to a Mr. Drebber, residing at Charpentier's boarding establishment, Torquay Terrace. Thus I got at his address."

"Smart—very smart!" murmured Sherlock Holmes.

"I next called upon Madame Charpentier," continued the detective. "I found her very pale and distressed. Her daughter was in the room, too—an uncommonly fine girl she is, too; she was looking red about the eyes, and her lips trembled as I spoke to her. That didn't escape my notice. I began to smell a rat. You know the feeling, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, when you come upon the right scent—a kind of thrill in your nerves. 'Have you heard of the mysterious death of your late boarder, Mr. Enoch J. Drebber, of Cleveland?' I asked.

"The mother nodded. She didn't seem able to get out a word. The daughter burst into tears. I felt

more than ever that these people knew something of the matter.

" 'At what o'clock did Mr. Drebber leave your house for the train?' I asked.

" 'At eight o'clock,' she said, gulping in her throat to keep down her agitation. 'His secretary, Mr. Stangerson, said that there were two trains—one at 9:15 and one at 11. He was to catch the first.'

" 'And was that the last you saw of him?'

"A terrible change came over the woman's face as I asked the question. Her features turned perfectly livid. It was some seconds before she could get out the single word, 'Yes,' and when it did come it was in a husky, unnatural tone.

"There was silence for a moment, and then the daughter spoke in a calm, clear voice.

" 'No good can ever come of falsehood, mother,' she said. "Let us be frank with this gentleman. We *did* see Mr. Drebber again.'

" 'God forgive you!' cried Madame Charpentier, throwing up her hands and sinking back in her chair. 'You have murdered your brother!'

" 'Arthur would rather that we spoke the truth,' the girl answered, firmly.

" 'You had best tell me all about it now,' I said. 'Half confidences are worse than none. Besides, you do not know how much we know of it.'

" 'On your head be it, Alice!' cried her mother; and then, turning to me: 'I will tell you all, sir. Do not

imagine that my agitation on behalf of my son arises from any fear lest he should have had a hand in this terrible affair. He is utterly innocent of it. My dread is, however, that in your eyes and in the eyes of others he may appear to be compromised. That, however, is surely impossible. His high character, his profession, his antecedents would all forbid it.'

"'Your best way is to make a clean breast of the facts,' I answered. 'Depend upon it, if your son is innocent he will be none the worse.'

"'Perhaps, Alice, you had better leave us together,' she said, and her daughter withdrew. 'Now, sir,' she continued, 'I had no intention of telling you all this, but since my poor daughter has disclosed it I have no alternative. Having once decided to speak, I will tell you all, without omitting any particular.'

"'It is your wisest course,' said I.

"'Mr. Drebber has been with us nearly three weeks. He and his secretary, Mr. Stangerson, had been traveling on the Continent. I noticed a Copenhagen label upon each of their trunks, showing that that had been their last stopping-place. Stangerson was a quiet, reserved man, but his employer, I am sorry to say, was far otherwise. He was coarse in his habits and brutish in his ways. The very night of his arrival he became very much the worse for drink, and, indeed, after twelve o'clock in the day he could hardly ever be said to be sober. His manners toward the maid-servants were disgustingly free and familiar. Worst of all, he

speedily assumed the same attitude toward my daughter, Alice, and spoke to her more than once in a way which, fortunately, she is too innocent to understand. On one occasion he actually seized her in his arms and embraced her—an outrage which caused his own secretary to reproach him for his unmanly conduct.'

" 'But why did you stand all this?' I asked. 'I suppose that you can get rid of your boarders when you wish.'

"Mrs. Charpentier blushed at my pertinent question.

" 'Would to God that I had given him notice on the very day he came,' she said. 'But it was a sore temptation. They were paying a pound a day each—fourteen pounds a week, and this is a slack season. I am a widow, and my boy in the navy has cost me much. I grudged to lose the money. I acted for the best. This last was too much, however, and I gave him notice to leave on account of it. That was the reason of his going.'

" 'Well?'

" 'My heart grew light when I saw him drive away. My son is on leave just now, but I did not tell him anything of this, for his temper is volent, and he is passionately fond of his sister. When I closed the door behind them a load seemed to be lifted from my mind. Alas! in less than an hour there was a ring at the bell, and I learned that Mr. Drebber had returned. He was much excited, and evidently the worse for drink.

He forced his way into the room where I was sitting with my daughter, and made some incoherent remark about having missed his train. He then turned to Alice, and, before my very face, proposed to her that she should fly with him. "You are of age," he said, "and there is no law to stop you. I have money enough and to spare. Never mind the old girl here, but come along with me now straight away. You shall live like a princess." Poor Alice was so frightened that she shrunk away from him, but he caught her by the wrist and endeavored to draw her toward the door. I screamed, and at that moment my son Arthur came into the room. What happened then I do not know. I heard oaths and the confused sounds of a scuffle. I was too terrified to raise my head. When I did look up I saw Arthur standing in the doorway laughing, with a stick in his hand. "I don't think that fine fellow will trouble us again," he said. "I will just go after him and see what he does with himself." With those words he took his hat and started off down the street. The next morning we heard of Mr. Drebber's mysterious death.'

"This statement came from Mrs. Charpentier's lips with many gasps and pauses. At times she spoke so low that I could hardly catch the words. I made shorthand notes of all she said, however, so that there should be no possibility of a mistake."

"It's quite exciting," said Sherlock Holmes, with a yawn. "What happened next?"

"When Mrs. Charpentier paused," the detective continued, "I saw that the whole case hung upon one point. Fixing her with my eye in a way which I always found effective with women, I asked her at what hour her son returned.

"'I do not know,' she answered.

"'Not know?'

"'No; he has a latch-key, and let himself in.'

"'After you went to bed?'

"'Yes.'

"'When did you go to bed?'

"'About eleven.'

"'So your son was gone at least two hours?'

"'Yes.'

"'Possibly four or five?'

"'Yes.'

"'What was he doing during that time?'

"'I do not know,' she answered, turning white to her very lips.

"Of course, after that there was nothing more to be done. I found out where Lieutenant Charpentier was, took two officers with me, and arrested him. When I touched him on the shoulder and warned him to come quietly with us, he answered us, as bold as brass: 'I suppose you are arresting me for being concerned in the death of that scoundrel Drebber,' he said. We had said nothing to him about it, so that his alluding to it had a most suspicious aspect."

"Very," said Holmes.

"He still carried the heavy stick which the mother described him as having with him when he followed Drebber. It was a stout oak cudgel."

"What is your theory, then?"

"Well, my theory is that he followed Drebber as far as the Brixton Road. When there, a fresh altercation arose between them, in the course of which Drebber received a blow from the stick, in the pit of the stomach, perhaps, which killed him without leaving any mark. The night was so wet that no one was about, so Charpentier dragged the body of his victim into the empty house. As to the candle, and the blood, and the writing on the wall, and the ring, they may all be so many tricks to throw the police on the wrong scent."

"Well done!" said Holmes, in an encouraging voice. "Really, Gregson, you are getting along. We shall make something of you yet."

"I flatter myself that I have managed it rather neatly," the detective answered, proudly. "The young man volunteered a statement, in which he said that after following Drebber for some time, the latter perceived him, and took a cab in order to get away from him. On his way he met an old shipmate, and took a long walk with him. On being asked where his old shipmate lived, he was unable to give any satisfactory reply. I think the whole case fits together uncommonly well. What amuses me is to think of Lestrade, who had started off upon the wrong scent. I am

afraid he won't make much of it. Why, by Jove, here's the very man himself!"

It was indeed Lestrade, who had ascended the stairs while we were talking, and who now entered the room. The assurance and jauntiness which generally marked his demeanor and dress were, however, wanting. His face was disturbed and troubled, while his clothes were disarranged and untidy. He had evidently come with the intention of consulting with Sherlock Holmes, for on perceiving his colleague he appeared to be embarrassed and put out. He stood in the centre of the room, fumbling nervously with his hat, and uncertain what to do.

"This is a most extraordinary case," he said, at last; "a most incomprehensible affair."

"Ah, you find it so, Mr. Lestrade!" cried Gregson, triumphantly. "I thought you would come to that conclusion. Have you managed to find the secretary, Mr. Joseph Stangerson?"

"The secretary, Mr. Joseph Stangerson," said Lestrade, gravely, "was murdered at Halliday's Private Hotel about six o'clock this morning."

CHAPTER VII.

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS.

THE intelligence with which Lestrade greeted us was so momentous and so unexpected that we were all three fairly dumfounded. Gregson sprang out of his chair and upset the remainder of his whiskey and water. I started in silence at Sherlock Holmes, whose lips were compressed and his brows drawn down over his eyes.

"Stangerson, too!" he muttered. "The plot thickens!"

"It was quite thick enough before," grumbled Lestrade, taking a chair. "I seem to have dropped into a sort of council of war."

"Are you—are you sure of this piece of intelligence?" stammered Gregson.

"I have just come from his room," said Lestrade. "I was the first to discover what had occurred."

"We have been hearing Gregson's view of the matter," Holmes observed. "Would you mind letting us know what you have seen and done?"

"I have no objection," Lestrade answered, seating

himself. "I freely confess that I was of the opinion that Stangerson was concerned in the death of Drebber. This fresh development has shown me that I was completely mistaken. Full of the one idea, I set myself to find out what had become of the secretary. They had been seen together at Euston Station about half-past eight on the evening of the third. At two in the morning Drebber had been found in the Brixton Road. The question which confronted me was to find out how Stangerson had been employed between 8:30 and the time of the crime, and what had become of him afterward. I telegraphed to Liverpool, giving a description of the man, and warning them to keep a watch upon the American boats. I then set to work calling upon all the hotels and lodging-houses in the vicinity of Euston. You see, I argued that if Drebber and his companion had become separated, the natural course for the latter would be to put up somewhere in the vicinity for the night, and then to hang about the station again next morning."

"They would be likely to agree on some meeting-place beforehand," remarked Holmes.

"So it proved. I spent the whole of yesterday evening in making inquiries, entirely without avail. This morning I began very early, and at eight o'clock I reached Halliday's Private Hotel, in Little George Street. On my inquiry as to whether a Mr. Stangerson was living there, they at once answered me in the affirmative.

"'No doubt you are the gentleman he was expecting,' they said. 'He has been waiting for a gentleman for two days.'

"'Where is he now?' I asked.

"'He is up stairs in bed. He wished to be called at nine.'

"It seemed to me that my sudden appearance might shake his nerves and lead him to say something unguarded. The Boots volunteered to show me the room; it was on the second floor, and there was a small corridor leading up to it. The Boots pointed out the door to me, and was about to go down stairs again, when I saw something that made me feel sickish, in spite of my twenty years' experience. From under the door there curled a little red ribbon of blood, which had meandered across the passage and formed a little pool along the skirting at the other side. I gave a cry, which brought the Boots back. He nearly fainted when he saw it. The door was locked on the inside, but we put our shoulders to it and knocked it in. The window of the room was open, and beside the window, all hudled up, lay the body of a man in his night-dress. He was quite dead, and had been for some time, for his limbs were rigid and cold. When we turned him over the Boots recognized his at once as being the same gentleman who had engaged the room under the name of Joseph Stangerson. The cause of death was a deep stab in the left side, which must have penetrated the

heart. And now comes the strangest part of the affair. What do you suppose was above the murdered man?"

I felt a creeping of flesh, and a presentiment of coming horror, even before Sherlock Holmes answered:

"The word 'Rache,' written in letters of blood," he said.

"That was it," said Lestrade, in an awe-struck voice; and we were all silent for a while.

There was something so methodical and so incomprehensible about the deeds of this unknown assassin, that it imparted a fresh ghastliness to his crimes. My nerves, which were steady enough on the field of battle, tingled as I thought of it.

"The man was seen," continued Lestrade. "A milk-boy, passing on his way to the dairy, happened to walk down the lane which leads from the mews at the back of the hotel. He noticed that a ladder, which usually lay there, was raised against one of the windows of the second floor, which was wide open. After passing, he looked back and saw a man descend the ladder. He came down so quietly and openly that the boy imagined him to be some carpenter or joiner at work in the hotel. He took no particular notice of him, beyond thinking in his own mind that it was early for him to be at work. He has an impression that the man was tall, had a reddish face, and was dressed in a long, brownish coat. He must have stayed in the room some little time after the murder, for we found blood-

stained water in the basin, where he had washed his hands, and marks on the sheets where he had deliberately wiped his knife."

I glanced at Holmes on hearing the description of the murderer, which tallied so exactly with his own. There was, however, no trace of exultation or satisfaction upon his face.

"Did you find nothing in the room which could furnish a clue to the murderer?" he asked.

"Nothing. Stangerson had Drebber's purse in his pocket, but it seems that this was usual, as he did all the paying. There was eighty-odd pounds in it, but nothing had been taken. Whatever the motives of these extraordinary crimes, robbery is certainly not one of them. There were no papers or memoranda in the murdered man's pockets, except a single telegram, dated from Cleveland about a month ago, and containing the words, 'J. H. is in Europe.' There was no name appended to this message."

"And was there nothing else?" Holmes asked.

"Nothing of any importance. The man's novel, with which he had read himself to sleep, was lying upon the bed, and his pipe was on a chair beside him. There was a glass of water on the table, and on the window-sill a small chip ointment box containing a couple of pills."

Sherlock Holmes sprang from his chair with an exclamation of delight.

"The last link!" he cried, exultantly. "My case is complete."

The two detectives stared at him in amazement.

"I have now in my hands," my companion said, confidently, "all the threads which have formed such a tangle. There are, of course, details to be filled in, but I am as certain of all the main facts, from the time that Drebber parted from Stangerson at the station up to the discovery of the body of the latter, as if I had seen them with my own eyes. I will give you a proof of my knowledge. Could you lay your hand upon those pills?"

"I have them," said Lestrade, producing a small white box; "I took them and the purse and the telegram, intending to have them put in a place of safety at the police station. It was the merest chance my taking these pills, for I am bound to say that I do not attach any importance to them."

"Give them here," said Holmes. "Now, doctor," turning to me, "are those ordinary pills?"

They certainly were not. They were of a pearly gray color, small, round, and almost transparent against the light.

"From their lightness and transparency I should imagine that they are soluble in water," I remarked.

"Precisely so," answered Holmes. "Now, would you mind going down and fetching that poor little devil of a terrier which has been bad so long, and

which the landlady wanted you to put out of its pain yesterday?"

I went down stairs and carried the dog up stairs in my arms. Its labored breathing and glazing eye showed that it was not far from its end. Indeed, its snow-white muzzle proclaimed that it had already exceeded the usual term of canine existence. I placed it upon a cushion on the rug.

"I will now cut one of these pills in two," said Holmes; and, drawing his penknife, he suited the action to the word. "One half we return into the box for future purposes. The other half I will place in this wine-glass, in which is a teaspoonful of water. You perceive that our friend, the doctor, is right, and that it readily dissolves."

"This may be very interesting," said Lestrade, in the injured tone of one who suspects that he is being laughed at. "I cannot see, however, what it has to do with the death of Mr. Joseph Stangerson."

"Patience, my friend, patience! You will find in time that it has everything to do with it. I shall now add a little milk to make the mixture palatable, and on presenting it to the dog we find that he laps it up readily enough."

As he spoke he turned the contents of the wine-glass into a saucer and placed it in front of the terrier, who speedily licked it dry. Sherlock Holmes' earnest demeanor had so far convinced us that we all sat in silence, watching the animal intently, and expecting

some startling effect. None appeared, however. The dog continued to lie upon the cushion, breathing in a labored way, but apparently neither the better nor worse for its draught.

Holmes had taken out his watch, and as minute followed minute without result, an expression of the utmost chagrin and disappointment appeared upon his features. He gnawed his lip, drummed his fingers upon the table, and showed every other symptom of acute impatience. So great was his emotion that I felt sincerely sorry for him, while the two detectives smiled derisively, by no means displeased at this check which he had met.

"It can't be a coincidence," he cried at last, springing from his chair and pacing wildly up and down the room; "it is impossible that it should be a mere coincidence. The very pills which I suspected in the case of Drebber are actually found after the death of Stangerson. And yet they are inert. What can it mean? Surely my whole chain of reasoning cannot have been false! It is impossible! And yet this wretched dog is none the worse. Ah, I have it! I have it!" With a perfect shriek of delight he rushed to the box, cut the other pill in two, dissolved it, added milk, and presented it to the terrier. The unfortunate creature's tongue seemed hardly to have been moistened in it before it gave a convulsive shiver in every limb, and lay as rigid and lifeless as if it had been struck by lightning.

Sherlock Holmes drew a long breath, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"I should have more faith," he said; "I ought to know by this time that when a fact appears to be opposed to a long train of deductions it invariably proves to be capable of bearing some other interpretation. Of the two pills in that box one was the most deadly poison and the other was entirely harmless. I ought to have known that before I ever saw the box at all."

This last statement appeared to me to be so startling that I could hardly believe that he was in his sober senses. There was the dead dog, however, to prove that his conjecture had been correct. It seemed to me that the mists in my own mind were gradually clearing away, and I began to have a dim, vague perception of the truth.

"All this seems strange to you," continued Holmes, "because you failed at the beginning of the inquiry to grasp the importance of the single real clue which was presented to you. I had the good fortune to seize upon that, and everything which has occurred since then has served to confirm my original supposition, and, indeed, was the logical sequence of it. Hence, things which have perplexed you and made the case more obscure have served to enlighten me and to strengthen my conclusions. It is a mistake to confound strangeness with mystery. The most commonplace crime is often the most mysterious, because it

presents no new or special features from which deductions may be drawn. This murder would have been infinitely more difficult to unravel had the body of the victim been simply found lying in the roadway without any of those *outre* and sensational accompaniments which have rendered it remarkable. These strange details, far from making the case more difficult, have really had the effect of making it less so."

Mr. Gregson, who had listened to this address with considerable impatience, could contain himself no longer.

"Look here, Mr. Sherlock Holmes," he said, "we are all ready to acknowledge that you are a smart man, and that you have your own methods of working. We want something more than mere theory and preaching now, though. It is a case of taking the man. I have made my case out, and it seems I was wrong. Young Charpentier could not have been engaged in this second affair. Lestrade went after this man, Stangerson, and it appears that he was wrong, too. You have thrown out hints here and there, and seem to know more than we do, but the time has come when we feel that we have a right to ask you straight how much you do know of the business. Can you name the man who did it?"

"I cannot help feeling that Gregson is right, sir," remarked Lestrade. "We have both tried, and we have both failed. You have remarked more than once

since I have been in the room that you have all the evidence which you require. Surely you will not withhold it any longer."

"Any delay in arresting the assassin," I observed, "might give him time to perpetrate some fresh atrocity."

Thus pressed by us all Holmes showed signs of irresolution. He continued to walk up and down the room with his head sunk on his chest and his brows drawn down, as was his habit when lost in thought.

"There will be no more murders," he said, at last, stopping abruptly and facing us. "You can put that consideration out of the question. You have asked me if I know the name of the assassin. I do. The mere knowing of his name is a small thing, however, compared with the power of laying our hands upon him. This I expect very shortly to do. I have good hopes of managing it through my own arrangements; but it is a thing which needs delicate handling, for we have a shrewd and desperate man to deal with, who is supported, as I have had occasion to prove, by another who is as clever as himself. As long as this man has no idea that any one can have a clue, there is some chance of securing him; but if he had the slightest suspicion he would change his name, and vanish in an instant among the four million inhabitants of this great city. Without meaning to hurt either of your feelings, I am bound to say that I consider these men to be more than a match for the official force, and that is

why I have not asked your assistance. If I fail I shall of course incur all the blame due to this omission; but that I am prepared for. At present I am ready to promise that the instant that I can communicate with you without endangering my own combinations I shall do so."

Gregson and Lestrade seemed to be far from satisfied by this assurance, or by the depreciating allusion to the detective police. The former had flushed up to the roots of his flaxen hair, while the other's beady eyes glistened with curiosity and resentment. Neither of them had time to speak, however, before there was a tap at the door and the spokesman of the street arabs, young Wiggins, introduced his insignificant and unsavory person.

"Please, sir," he said, touching his forehead, "I have the cab down stairs."

"Good boy," said Holmes, blandly. "Why don't you introduce this pattern at Scotland Yard?" he continued, taking a pair of steel handcuffs from a drawer. "See how beautifully the spring works. They fasten in an instant."

"The old pattern is good enough," remarked Lestrade, "if we can find the man to put them on."

"Very good, very good," said Holmes, smiling. "The cabman may as well help me with my boxes. Just ask him to step up, Wiggins."

I was surprised to find my companion speaking as though he were about to set out on a journey, since he

had not said anything to me about it. There was a small portmanteau in the room, and this he pulled out and began to strap. He was busily engaged at it when the cabman entered the room.

"Just give me a help with this buckle, cabman," he said, kneeling over his task, and never turning his head.

The fellow came forward with a somewhat sullen, defiant air, and put down his hands to assist. At that instant there was a sharp click, the jangling of metal, and Sherlock Holmes sprang to his feet again.

"Gentlemen," he cried, with flashing eyes, "let me introduce you to Mr. Jefferson Hope, the murderer of Enoch Drebber and of Joseph Stangerson."

The whole thing occurred in a moment—so quickly that I had no time to realize it. I have a vivid recollection of that instant, of Holmes' triumphant expression and the ring of his voice, of the cabman's dazed, savage face, as he glared at the glittering handcuffs, which had appeared as if by magic upon his wrists. For a second or two we might have been a group of statues. Then, with an inarticulate roar of fury, the prisoner wrenched himself free from Holmes' grasp, and hurled himself through the window. Woodwork and glass gave way before him, but before he got quite through Gregson, Lestrade and Holmes sprang upon him like so many stag-hounds. He was dragged back into the room, and then commenced a terrific conflict. So poweful and so fierce was he that the four of us

were shaken off again and again. He appeared to have the convulsive strength of a man in an epileptic fit. His face and hands were terribly mangled by the passage through the glass, but loss of blood had no effect in diminishing his resistance. It was not until Lestrade succeeded in getting his hand inside his neck-cloth and half strangling him that we made him realize that his struggles were of no avail; and even then we felt no security until we had pinioned his feet as well as his hands. That done we rose to our feet, breathless and panting.

"We have his cab," said Sherlock Holmes. "It will serve to take him to Scotland Yard. And now, gentlemen," he continued, with a pleasant smile, "we have reached the end of our little mystery. You are very welcome to put any questions that you like to me now, and there is no danger that I will refuse to answer them."

PART II.

THE COUNTRY OF THE SAINTS.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE GREAT ALKALI PLAIN.

In the central portion of the great North American Continent there lies an arid and repulsive desert, which for many a long year served as a barrier against the advance of civilization. From the Sierra Nevada to Nebraska, and from the Yellowstone River in the north to the Colorado upon the south, is a region of desolation and silence. Nor is Nature always in one mood throughout this grim district. It comprises snow-capped and lofty mountains, and dark and gloomy valleys. There are swift-flowing rivers which dash through jagged canyons; and there are enormous plains, which in winter are white with snow, and in summer are gray with the saline alkali dust. They all preserve, however, the common characteristics of barrenness, inhospitality, and misery.

There are no inhabitants of this land of despair. A band of Pawnees or of Blackfeet may occasionally traverse it in order to reach other hunting-grounds, but the hardiest of the braves are glad to lose sight of those awesome plains, and to find themselves once more upon their prairies. The coyote skulks among the scrub, the buzzard flaps heavily through the air, and the clumsy grizzly bear lumbers through the dark ravines, and picks up such sustenance as it can among the rocks. These are the sole dwellers in the wilderness.

In the whole world there can be no more dreary view than that from the northern slope of the Sierra Blanco. As far as the eye can reach stretches the great flat plain-land, all dusted over with patches of alkali, and intersected by clumps of the dwarfish chaparal bushes. On the extreme verge of the horizon lie a long chain of mountain-peaks, with their rugged summits flecked with snow. In this great stretch of country there is no sign of life, nor of anything appertaining to life. There is no bird in the steel-blue heaven, no movement upon the dull, gray earth—above all, there is absolute silence. Listen as one may, there is no shadow of a sound in all that mighty wilderness; nothing but silence—complete and heart-subduing silence.

It has been said there is nothing appertaining to life upon the broad plain. That is hardly true. Looking

down from the Sierra Blanco, one sees a pathway traced out across the desert, which winds away and is lost in the extreme distance. It is rutted with wheels and trodden down by the feet of many adventurers. Here and there are scattered white objects which glisten in the sun, and stand out against the dull deposit of alkali. Approach, and examine them! They are bones; some large and coarse, others smaller and more delicate. The former have belonged to oxen, and the latter to men. For fifteen hundred miles one may trace this ghastly caravan route by these scattered remains of those who had fallen by the wayside.

Looking down on this very scene there stood upon the 4th of May, 1847, a solitary traveler. His appearance was such that he might have been the very genius or demon of the region. An observer would have found it difficult to say whether he was nearer to forty or to sixty. His face was lean and haggard, and the brown, parchment-like skin was drawn tightly over the projecting bones; his long, brown hair and beard were all flecked and dashed with white; his eyes were sunken in his head and burned with an unnatural lustre, while the hand which grasped his rifle was hardly more fleshy than that of a skeleton. As he stood, he leaned upon his weapon for support, and yet his tall figure and the massive framework of his bones suggested a wiry and vigorous constitution. His gaunt face, however, and his clothes, which hung so baggily

over his shrivelled limbs, proclaimed what it was that gave him that senile and decrepit appearance. The man was dying—dying from hunger and thirst.

He had toiled painfully down the ravine, and on to this little elevation, in the vain hope of seeing some signs of water. Now the great salt plain stretched before his eyes, and the distant belt of savage mountains, without a sign anywhere of plant or tree, which might indicate the presence of moisture. In all that broad landscape there was no gleam of hope. North, and east, and west he looked with wild, questioning eyes, and then he realized that his wanderings had come to an end, and that there, on that barren crag, he was about to die.

"Why not here, as well as in a feather bed, twenty years hence," he muttered, as he seated himself in the shelter of a bowlder.

Before sitting down he had deposited upon the ground his useless rifle, and also a large bundle tied up in a gray shawl, which he had carried slung over his right shoulder. It appeared to be somewhat too heavy for his strength, for, in lowering it, it came down on the ground with some little violence. Instantly there broke from the gray parcel a little moaning cry, and from it there protruded a small, scared face, with very bright brown eyes, and two little speckled dimpled fists.

"You've hurt me," said a childish voice, reproachfully.

"Have I, though?" the man answered, penitently; "I didn't go for to do it."

As he spoke he unwrapped the gray shawl and extricated a pretty little girl of about five years of age, whose dainty shoes and smart pink frock, with its little linen apron, all bespoke a mother's care. The child was pale and wan, but her healthy arms and legs showed that she had suffered less than her companion.

"How is it now?" he answered, anxiously, for she was still rubbing the towsy golden curls which covered the back of her head.

"Kiss it and make it well," she said, with perfect gravity, showing the injured part up to him. "That's what mother used to do. Where's mother?"

"Mother's gone. I guess you'll see her before long."

"Gone, eh!" said the little girl. "Funny she didn't say good-by; she 'most always did if she was just goin' over to auntie's for tea, and now she's been away for three days. Say, it's awful dry, ain't it? Ain't there no water nor nothing to eat?"

"No, there ain't nothing, dearie. You'll just need to be patient awhile, and then you'll be all right. Put your head up agin me, like that, and then you'll feel better. It ain't easy to talk when your lips is like leather, but I guess I'd best let you know how the cards lie. What's that you've got?"

"Pretty things! fine things!" cried the little girl, enthusiastically, holding up two glittering fragments

of mica. "When we goes back to home I'll give them to brother Bob."

"You'll see prettier things than them soon," said the man, confidently. "You just wait a bit. I was going to tell you, though—you remember when we left the river?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, we reckoned we'd strike another river soon, d'ye see. But there was somethin' wrong; compasses, or map, or somethin', and it didn't turn up. Water ran out. Just except a little drop for the likes of you and—and"——

"And you couldn't wash yourself," interrupted his companion, gravely, staring up at his grimy visage.

"No, nor drink. And Mr. Bender, he was the first to go, and then Indian Pete, and then Mrs. McGregor, and then Johnny Hones, and then, dearie, your mother."

"Then mother's a deader, too," cried the little girl, dropping her face in her pinafore and sobbing bitterly.

"Yes; they all went except you and me. Then I thought there was some chance of water in this direction, so I heaved you over my shoulder and we tramped it together. It don't seem as though we've improved matters. There's an almighty small chance for us now!"

"Do you mean that we are going to die, too?" asked the child, checking her sobs, and raising her tear-stained face.

"I guess that's about the size of it."

"Why didn't you say so before?" she said, laughing gleefully. "You gave me such a fright. Why, of course, now as long as we die we'll be with mother again."

"Yes, you will, dearie."

"And you, too—I'll tell her how awful good you've been. I'll bet she meets us at the door of heaven with a big pitcher of water, and a lot of buckwheat cakes, hot, and toasted on both sides, like Bob and me was fond of. How long will it be first?"

"I don't know—not very long."

The man's eyes were fixed upon the northern horizon. In the blue vault of heaven there appeared three little specks which increased in size every moment, so rapidly did they approach. They speedily resolved themselves into three large brown birds, which circled over the heads of the two wanderers, and then settled upon some rocks which overlooked them. They were buzzards, the vultures of the West, whose coming is the forerunner of death.

"Cocks and hens," cried the little girl, gleefully, pointing at their ill-omened forms, and clapping her hands to make them rise. "Say, did God make this country?"

"In course He did," said her companion, rather startled by this unexpected question.

"He made the country down in Illinois, and He made the Missouri," the little girl continued. "I

guess somebody else made the country in these parts. It's not nearly so well done. They forgot the water and the trees."

"What would ye think of offering up prayer?" the man asked, diffidently.

"It ain't night yet," she answered.

"It don't matter. It ain't quite regular, but He won't mind that, you bet. You say over them ones that you used to say every night in the wagon when we was on the plains."

"Why don't you say some yourself?" the child asked, with wondering eyes.

"I disremember them," he answered. "I hain't said none since I was half the height o' that gun. I guess it's never too late. You say them out, and I'll stand by and come in on the choruses."

"Then you'll need to kneel down, and me, too," she said, laying the shawl out for that purpose. "You've got to put your hands up like this. It makes you feel kind of good."

It was a strange sight, had there been anything but the buzzards to see it. Side by side on the narrow shawl knelt the two wanderers, the little, prattling child and the reckless, hardened adventurer. Her chubby face and his haggard, angular visage were both turned up to the cloudless heaven in heartfelt entreaty to that dread Being with whom they were face to face, while the two voices—the one thin and clear, the other deep and harsh—united in the entreaty for

mercy and forgiveness. The prayer finished, they resumed their seat in the shadow of the bowlder until the child fell asleep, nestling on the broad breast of her protector. He watched over her slumber for some time, but Nature proved too strong for him. For three days and three nights he had allowed himself neither rest nor repose. Slowly the eyelids drooped over the tired eyes, and the head sank lower and lower upon the breast, until the man's grizzled beard was mixed with the golden tresses of his companion, and both slept the same deep and dreamless slumber.

Had the wanderer remained awake for another half-hour a strange sight would have met his eyes. Far away on the extreme verge of the alkali plain there rose up a little spray of dust, very slight at first, and hardly to be distinguished from the mists of the distance, but gradually growing higher and broader, until it formed a solid, well-defined cloud. This cloud continued to increase in size until it became evident that it could only be raised by a great multitude of moving creatures. In more fertile spots the observer would have come to the conclusion that one of those great herds of bisons which graze upon the prairie-land was approaching him. This was obviously impossible in these arid wilds. As the whirl of dust drew nearer to the solitary bluff upon which the two castaways were reposing, the canvas-covered tilts of wagons and the figures of armed horsemen began to show up through the haze, and the apparition revealed itself as being

a great caravan upon its journey for the West. But what a caravan! When the head of it had reached the base of the mountains, the rear was not yet visible on the horizon. Right across the enormous plain stretched the straggling array, wagons and carts, men on horseback, and men on foot. Innumerable women who staggered along under burdens, and children who toddled beside the wagons or peeped out from under the white coverings. This was evidently no ordinary party of immigrants, but rather some nomad people who had been compelled from stress of circumstances to seek themselves a new country. There rose through the clear air a confused clattering and rumbling from this great mass of humanity, with the creaking of wheels and the neighing of horses. Loud as it was, it was not sufficient to rouse the two tired wayfarers above them.

At the head of the column there rose a score or more of grave, iron-faced men, clad in sober homespun garments and armed with rifles. On reaching the base of the bluff they halted and held a short council among themselves.

"The wells are to the right, my brothers," said one, a hard-lipped, clean-shaven man with grizzly hair.

"To the right of the Sierra Blanco—so we shall reach the Rio Grande," said another.

"Fear not for water," cried a third. He who could draw it from the rocks will not now abandon His own chosen people."

"Amen! amen!" responded the whole party.

They were about to resume their journey when one of the youngest and keenest-eyed uttered an exclamation and pointed up at the rugged crag above them. From its summit there fluttered a little wisp of pink, showing up hard and bright against the gray rocks behind. At the sight there was a general reining up of horses and unslinging of guns, while fresh horsemen came galloping up to reinforce the vanguard. The word "redskins" was on every lip.

"There can't be any number of Injuns here," said the elderly man who appeared to be in command. "We have passed the Pawnees, and there are no other tribes until we cross the great mountains."

"Shall I go forward and see, Brother Stangerson?" asked one of the band.

"And I," "And I," cried a dozen voices.

"Leave your horses below and we will wait you here," the elder answered. In a moment the young fellows had dismounted, fastened their horses, and were ascending the precipitous slope which led up to the object which had excited their curiosity. They advanced rapidly and noiselessly, with the confidence and dexterity of practiced scouts. The watchers from the plain below could see them flit from rock to rock until their figures stood out against the sky-line. The young man who had first given the alarm was leading them. Suddenly his followers saw him throw up his hands, as though overcome with astonishment, and,

on joining him, they were affected in the same way by the sight which met their eyes.

On the little plateau which crowned the barren hill there stood a single giant bowlder, and against this bowlder there lay a tall man, long-bearded and hard-featured, but of an excessive thinness; his placid face and regular breathing showed that he was fast asleep. Beside him lay a little child, with her round white arms encircling his brown, sinewy neck, and her golden-haired head resting upon the breast of his velveteen tunic. Her rosy lips were parted, showing the regular line of snow-white teeth within, and a playful smile played over her infantile features. Her plump little white legs, terminating in white socks and neat shoes with shining buckles, offered a strange contrast to the long, shrivelled members of her companion. On the ledge of rock above this strange couple there stood three solemn buzzards, who, at the sight of the newcomers, uttered raucous screams of disappointment and flapped sullenly away.

The cries of the foul birds awoke the two sleepers, who stared about them in bewilderment. The man staggered to his feet and looked down upon the plain which had been so desolate when sleep had overtaken him, and which was now traversed by this enormous body of men and beasts. His face assumed an expression of incredulity as he gazed, and he passed his bony hand over his eyes.

"This is what they call delirium, I guess," he mut-

tered. The child stood beside him, holding on to the skirt of his coat, and said nothing, but looked all round her with the wondering, questioning gaze of childhood.

The rescuing party were speedily able to convince the two castaways that their appearance was no delusion. One of them seized the little girl, and hoisted her upon his shoulder, while two others supported her gaunt companion and assisted him toward the wagons.

"My name is John Ferrier," the wanderer explained; "me and that little 'un are all that's left o' twenty-one people. The rest is all dead o' thirst and hunger away down in the south."

"Is she your child?" asked some one.

"I guess she is now," the other cried, defiantly; "she's mine cause I saved her. No man will take her away from me. She's Lucy Ferrier from this day on. Who are you, though?" he continued, glancing with curiosity at his stalwart, sunburned rescuers; "there seems to be a powerful lot of ye."

"Nigh upon ten thousand," said one of the young men; "we are the persecuted children of God—the chosen of the angel Merona."

"I never heard tell on him," said the wanderer. "He appears to have chosen a fair crowd of ye."

"Do not jest at that which is sacred," said the other, sternly. "We are of those who believe in those sacred writings, drawn in Egyptian letters on plates of beaten gold, which were handed unto the holy Joseph Smith, at Palmyra. We have come from Nauvoo, in the

State of Illinois, where we had founded our temple. We have come to seek a refuge from the violent man and from the godless, even though it be in the heart of the desert."

The name of Nauvoo evidently recalled recollections to John Ferrier.

"I see," he said; "you are the Mormons."

"We are the Mormons," answered his companions, with one voice.

"And where are you going?"

"We do not know. The hand of God is leading us under the person of our prophet. You must come before him. He shall say what is to be done with you."

They had reached the base of the hill by this time, and were surrounded by crowds of the pilgrims—pale-faced, meek-looking women, strong, laughing children, and anxious, earnest-eyed men. Many were the cries of astonishment and of commiseration which arose from them when they perceived the youth of one of the strangers and the destitution of the other. Their escort did not halt, however, but pushed on, followed by a great crowd of Mormons, until they reached a wagon which was conspicuous for its great size and for the gaudiness and smartness of its appearance. Six horses were yoked to it, whereas the others were furnished with two, or, at most, four apiece. Beside the driver there sat a man who could not have been more than thirty years of age, but whose massive head and

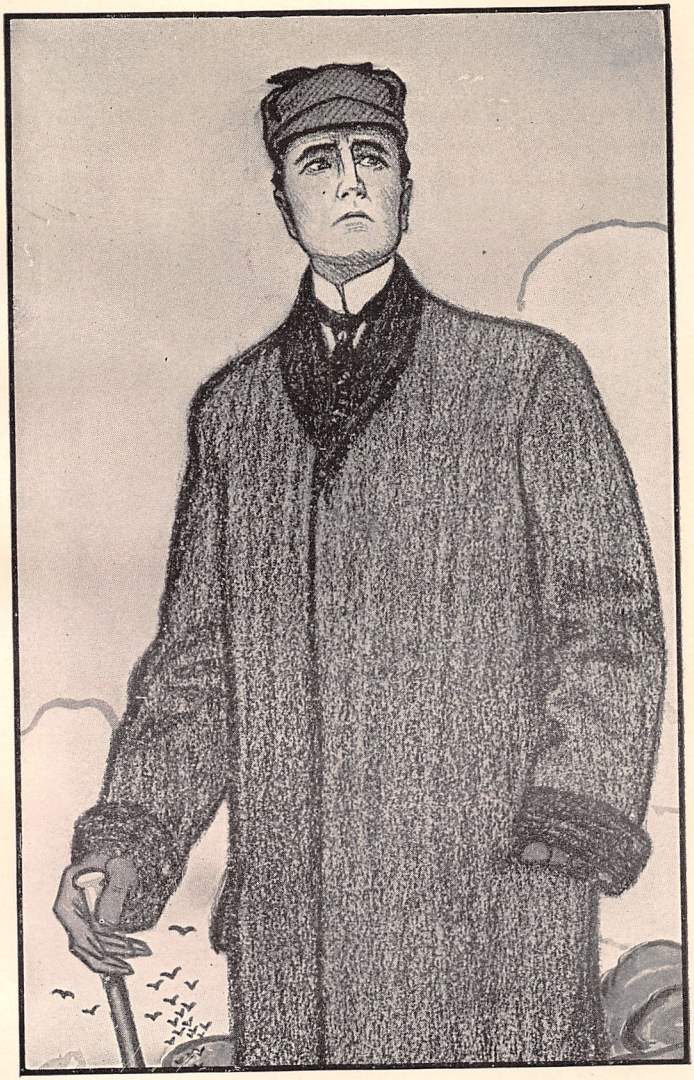
resolute expression marked him as a leader. He was reading a brown-backed volume, but as the crowd approached he laid it aside, and listened attentively to an account of the episode. Then he turned to the two castaways.

"If we take you with us," he said, in solemn words, "it can only be as believers in our own creed. We shall have no wolves in our fold. Better far that your bones should bleach in this wilderness than that you should prove to be that little speck of decay which in time corrupts the whole fruit. Will you come with us on these terms?"

"Guess I'll come with you on any terms," said Ferrier, with such emphasis that the grave elders could not restrain a smile. The leader alone retained his stern, impressive expression.

"Take him, Brother Stangerson," he said; "give him food and drink, and the child likewise. Let it be your task also to teach him our holy creed. We have delayed long enough. Forward! On, on to Zion!"

"On, on to Zion!" cried the crowd of Mormons, and the words rippled down the long caravan, passing from mouth to mouth until they died away in a dull murmur in the far distance. With a cracking of whips and a creaking of wheels the great wagon got into motion, and soon the whole caravan was winding along once more. The elder to whose care the two waifs had been committed led them to his wagon, where a meal was already awaiting them.



"PLENTY ON MY MIND—PLENTY!"

—A Study in Scarlet

"You shall remain here," he said. "In a few days you will have recovered from your fatigues. In the meantime, remember that now and forever you are of our religion. Brigham Young has said it, and he has spoken with the voice of Joseph Smith, which is the voice of God."

CHAPTER II.

THE FLOWER OF UTAH.

THIS is not the place to commemorate the trials and privations endured by the immigrant Mormons before they came to their final haven. From the shores of the Mississippi to the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains they had struggled on with a constancy almost unparalleled in history. The savage man and the savage beast, hunger, thirst, fatigue, and disease—every impediment which Nature could place in the way, had all been overcome with Anglo-Saxon tenacity. Yet the long journey and the accumulated terrors had shaken the hearts of the stoutest among them. There was not one who did not sink upon his knees in heartfelt prayer when they saw the broad valley of Utah bathed in the sunlight beneath them, and learned from the lips of their leader that this was the promised land, and that these virgin acres were to be theirs forevermore.

Young speedily proved himself to be a skilful administrator, as well as a resolute chief. Maps were drawn and charts prepared, in which the future city

was sketched out. All around farms were apportioned and allotted in proportion to the standing of each individual. The tradesman was put to his trade and the artisan to his calling. In the town streets and squares sprang up as if by magic. In the country there was draining and hedging, planting and clearing, until the next summer saw the whole country golden with the wheat crop. Everything prospered in the strange settlement. Above all, the great temple which they had erected in the centre of the city grew taller and larger. From the first blush of dawn until the closing of the twilight the clatter of the hammer and the rasp of the saw was never absent from the monument which the emigrants erected to Him who had led them safe through many dangers.

The two castaways, John Ferrier and the little girl who had shared his fortunes and had been adopted as his daughter, accompanied the Mormons to the end of their great pilgrimage. Little Lucy Ferrier was borne along pleasantly enough in Elder Stangerson's wagon, a retreat which she shared with the Mormon's three wives and with his son, a headstrong, forward boy of twelve. Having rallied, with the elasticity of childhood, from the shock caused by her mother's death, she soon became a pet with the women, and reconciled herself to this new life in her moving canvas-covered home. In the meantime Ferrier, having recovered from his privations, distinguished himself as a useful guide and an indefatigable hunter. So rap-

idly did he gain the esteem of his new companions that when they reached the end of their wanderings it was unanimously agreed that he should be provided with as large and fertile a tract of land as any of the settlers, with the exception of Young himself, and of Stangerson, Kimball, Johnston, and Drebber, who were the four principal elders.

On the farm thus acquired John Ferrier built himself a substantial log-house, which received so many additions in succeeding years that it grew into a roomy villa. He was a man of a practical turn of mind, keen in his dealings, and skilful with his hands. His iron constitution enabled him to work morning and evening at improving and tilling his lands. Hence it came about that his farm and all that belonged to him prospered exceedingly. In three years he was better off than his neighbors, in six he was well-to-do, in nine he was rich, and in twelve there were not half a dozen men in the whole of Salt Lake City who could compare with him. From the great inland sea to the distant Wahsatch Mountains there was no name better known than that of John Ferrier.

There was one way, and only one, in which he offended the susceptibilities of his co-religionists. No argument or persuasion could ever induce him to set up a female establishment after the manner of his companions. He never gave reasons for this persistent refusal, but contented himself by resolutely and inflexibly adhering to his determination. There were

some who accused him of lukewarmness in his adopted religion, and others who put it down to greed of wealth and reluctance to incur expense. Others, again, spoke of some early love affair, and of a fair-haired girl who had pined away on the shores of the Atlantic. Whatever the reason, Ferrier remained strictly celibate. In every other respect he conformed to the religion of the young settlement, and gaind the name of being an orthodox and straight-walking man.

Lucy Ferrier grew up within the log-house, and assisted her adopted father in all his undertakings. The keen air of the mountains and the balsamic odor of the pine-trees took the place of nurse and mother to the young girl. As year succeeded to year she grew taller and stronger, her cheek more ruddy, and her step more elastic. Many a wayfarer upon the high road which ran by Ferrier's farm felt long-forgotten thoughts revive in his mind as he watched her lithe, girlish figure tripping through the wheat-fields, or met her mounted upon her father's mustang, and managing it with all the ease and grace of a true child of the West. So the bud blossomed into a flower, and the year which saw her father the richest of the farmers left her as fair a specimen of American girlhood as could be found in the whole Pacific slope.

It was not the father, however, who first discovered that the child had developed into the woman. It seldom is in such cases. That mysterious change is too subtle and too gradual to be measured by dates. Least

of all does the maiden herself know it until the tone of a voice or the touch of a hand sets her heart thrilling within her, and she learns, with a mixture of pride and of fear, that a new and larger nature has awakened within her. There are few who cannot recall that day and remember the one little incident which heralded the dawn of a new life. In the case of Lucy Ferrier the occasion was serious enough in itself, apart from its future influence on her destiny and that of many besides.

It was a warm June morning, and the Latter-Day Saints were as busy as the bees whose hives they have chosen for their emblem. In the fields and in the streets rose the same hum of human industry. Down the dusty high-roads defiled long streams of heavily laden mules, all heading to the West, for the gold fever had broken out in California, and the Overland Route lay through the City of the Elect. There, too, were droves of sheep and bullocks coming in from the outlying pasture lands, and trains of tired immigrants, men and horses equally weary of their interminable journey. Through all this motley assemblage, threading her way with the skill of an accomplished rider, there galloped Lucy Ferrier, her fair face flushed with the exercise and her long chestnut hair floating out behind her. She had a commission from her father in the city, and was dashing in as she had done many a time before, with all the fearlessness of youth, thinking only of her task and how it was to be performed.

The travel-stained adventurers gazed after her in astonishment, and even the unemotional Indians, journeying in with their peltry, relaxed their accustomed stoicism as they marveled at the beauty of the pale-faced maiden.

She had reached the outskirts of the city when she found the road blocked by a great drove of cattle, driven by half a dozen wild-looking herdsmen from the plains. In her impatience she endeavored to pass this obstacle by pushing her horse into what appeared to be a gap. Scarcely had she got fairly into it, however, before the beasts closed in behind her, and she found herself completely imbedded in the moving stream of fierce-eyed, long-horned bullocks. Accustomed as she was to deal with cattle, she was not alarmed at her situation, but took advantage of every opportunity to urge her horse on in the hope of pushing her way through the cavalcade. Unfortunately the horns of one of the creatures, either by accident or design, came in violent contact with the flank of the mustang, and excited it to madness. In an instant it reared up upon its hind legs with a snort of rage, and pranced and tossed in a way that would have unseated any but a most skilful rider. The situation was full of peril. Every plunge of the excited horse brought it against the horns again, and goaded it to fresh madness. It was all that the girl could do to keep herself in the saddle, yet a slip would mean a terrible death under the hoofs of the unwieldy and terrified animals.

Unaccustomed to sudden emergencies, her head began to swim and her grip upon the bridle to relax. Choked by the rising cloud of dust and by the steam from the struggling creatures, she might have abandoned her efforts in despair but for a kindly voice at her elbow which assured her of assistance. At the same moment a sinewy brown hand caught the frightened horse by the curb, and, forcing a way through the drove, soon brought her to the outskirts.

"You're not hurt, I hope, miss," said her preserver, respectfully.

She looked up at his dark, fierce face, and laughed saucily.

"I'm awful frightened," she said, naively; "whoever would have thought that Poncho would have been so scared by a lot of cows?"

"Thank God you kept your seat," the other said, earnestly. He was a tall, savage-looking young fellow, mounted on a powerful roan horse, and clad in the rough dress of a hunter, with a long rifle slung over his shoulder. "I guess you are the daughter of John Ferrier," he remarked. "I saw you ride down from his house. When you see him, ask him if he remembers the Jefferson Hopes of St. Louis. If he's the same Ferrier, my father and he were pretty thick."

"Hadn't you better come and ask yourself?" she asked, demurely.

The young fellow seemed pleased at the suggestion, and his dark eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"I'll do so," he said; "we've been in the mountains for two months, and are not over and above in visiting condition. He must take us as he finds us."

"He has a good deal to thank you for, and so have I," she answered; "he's awful fond of me. If those cows had jumped on me he'd have never got over it."

"Neither would I," said her companion.

"You? Well, I don't see that it would make much matter to you, anyhow. You ain't even a friend of ours."

The young hunter's dark face grew so gloomy over this remark that Lucy Ferrier laughed aloud.

"There, I didn't mean that," she said; "of course you are a friend now. You must come and see us. Now I must push along, or father won't trust me with his business any more. Good-by."

"Good-by," he answered, raising his broad sombrero and bending over her little hand. She wheeled her mustang round, gave it a cut with her riding-whip, and darted away down the broad road in a rolling cloud of dust.

Young Jefferson Hope rode on with his companions, gloomy and taciturn. He and they had been among the Nevada Mountains prospecting for silver, and were returning to Salt Lake City in the hope of raising capital enough to work some lodes which they had discovered. He had been as keen as any of them upon the business until this sudden incident had drawn his thoughts into another channel. The sight of the fair

young girl, as frank and wholesome as the Sierra breezes, had stirred his volcanic, untamed heart to its very depths. When she had vanished from his sight he realized that a crisis had come in his life, and that neither silver speculations nor any other questions could ever be of such importance to him as this new and all-absorbing one. The love which had sprung up in his heart was not the sudden, changeable fancy of a boy, but rather the wild, fierce passion of a man of strong will and imperious temper. He had been accustomed to succeed in all that he undertook. He swore in his heart he would not fail in this if human effort and human perseverance could render him successful.

He called on John Ferrier that night, and many times again, until his face was a familiar one at the farmhouse. John, cooped up in the valley and absorbed in his work, had little chance of learning the news from the outside world during the last twelve years. All this Jefferson Hope was able to tell him, and in a style which interested Lucy as well as her father. He had been a pioneer in California, and could narrate many a strange tale of fortunes made and fortunes lost in those wild, halcyon days. He had been a scout, too, and a trapper, a silver explorer, and a ranchman. Wherever stirring adventures were to be had, Jefferson Hope had been there in search of them. He soon became a favorite with the old farmer, who spoke eloquently of his virtues. On such occasions

Lucy was silent, but her blushing cheek and her bright, happy eyes, showed only too clearly that her young heart was no longer her own. Her honest father may not have observed these symptoms, but they were assuredly not thrown away upon the man who had won her affections.

It was a summer evening when he came galloping down the road and pulled up at the gate. She was at the doorway, and came down to meet him. He threw the bridle over the fence and strode up the pathway.

"I am off, Lucy," he said, taking her two hands in his and gazing tenderly down into her face; "I won't ask you to come with me now, but will you be ready to come when I am here again?"

"And when will that be?" she asked, blushing and laughing.

"A couple of months at the outside. I will come and claim you then, my darling. There's no one who can stand between us."

"And how about father?" she asked.

"He has given his consent, provided we get these mines working all right. I have no fear on that head."

"Oh, well, of course, if you and father have arranged it all, there's no more to be said," she whispered, with her cheek against his broad breast.

"Thank God!" he said, hoarsely, stooping and kissing her. "It is settled then. The longer I stay the harder it will be for me to go. They are waiting for

me at the canyon. Good-by, my own darling—good-by. In two months you shall see me."

He tore himself from her as he spoke, and, flinging himself upon his horse, galloped furiously away, never even looking round, as though afraid that his resolution might fail him if he took one glance at what he was leaving. She stood at the gate, gazing after him until he vanished from sight. Then she walked back into the house, the happiest girl in all Utah.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN FERRIER TALKS WITH THE PROPHET.

THREE weeks had passed since Jefferson Hope and his comrades had departed from Salt Lake City. John Ferrier's heart was sore within him when he thought of the young man's return, and of the impending loss of his adopted child. Yet her bright and happy face reconciled him to the arrangement more than any argument could have done. He had always determined, deep down in his resolute heart, that nothing would ever induce him to allow his daughter to wed a Mormon. Such a marriage he regarded as no marriage at all, but as a shame and a disgrace. Whatever he might think of the Mormon doctrines, upon that one point he was inflexible. He had to seal his mouth on the subject, however, for to express an unorthodox opinion was a dangerous matter in those days in the Land of the Saints.

Yes, a dangerous matter—so dangerous that even the most saintly dared only whisper their religious opinions with bated breath, lest something which fell

from their lips might be misconstrued and bring down a swift retribution upon them. The victims of persecution had now turned persecutors on their own account, and persecutors of the most terrible description. Not the inquisition of Seville, nor the German Vehmgericht, nor the secret societies of Italy, were ever able to put a more formidable machinery in motion than that which cast a cloud over the Territory of Utah.

Its invisibility, and the mystery which was attached to it, made this organization doubly terrible. It appeared to be omniscent and omnipotent, and yet was neither seen nor heard. The man who held out against the church vanished away, and none knew whither he had gone or what had befallen him. His wife and children awaited him at home, but no father had ever returned to tell them how he had fared at the hands of his secret judges. A rash word or a hasty act was followed by annihilation, and yet none knew what the nature might be of this terrible power which was suspended over them. No wonder that men went about in fear and trembling, and that even in the heart of the wilderness they dared not whisper the doubts which oppressed them.

At first this vague and terrible power was exercised only upon the recalcitrants, who, having embraced the Mormon faith, wished afterward to pervert or to abandon it. Soon, however, it took a wider range. The supply of adult women was running short, and polygamy, without a female population on which to

draw, was a barren doctrine indeed. Strange rumors began to be bandied about—rumors of murdered immigrants and rifled camps in regions where Indians had never been seen. Fresh women appeared in the harems of the elders—women who pined and wept, and bore upon their faces the traces of an unextinguishable horror. Belated wanderers upon the mountains spoke of gangs of armed men, masked, stealthy, and noiseless, who flitted by them in the darkness. These tales and rumors took substance and shape, and were corroborated and recorroborated, until they resolved themselves into a definite name. To this day, in the lonely ranches of the West, the name of the Danite Band, or the Avenging Angels, is a sinister and an ill-omened one.

Fuller knowledge of the organization which produced such terrible results served to increase rather than to lessen the horror which it inspired in the minds of men. None knew who belonged to this ruthless society. The names of the participators in the deeds of blood and violence, done under the name of religion, were kept profoundly secret. The very friend to whom you communicated your misgivings as to the prophet and his mission might be one of those who would come forth at night with fire and sword to exact a terrible reparation. Hence every man feared his neighbor, and none spoke of the things which were nearest his heart.

One fine morning John Ferrier was about to set out

to his wheat fields when he heard the click of the latch, and, looking through the window, saw a stout, sandy-haired, middle-aged man coming up the pathway. His heart leaped to his mouth, for this was none other than the great Brigham Young himself. Full of trepidation, for he knew that such a visit boded him little good, Ferrier ran to the door to greet the Mormon chief. The latter, however, received his salutation coldly, and followed him with a stern face into the sitting-room.

"Brother Ferrier," he said, taking a seat and eyeing the farmer keenly from under his light-colored eyelashes, "the true believers have been good friends to you. We picked you up when you were starving in the desert, we shared our food with you, led you safe to the Chosen Valley, gave you a goodly share of land, and allowed you to wax rich under our protection. Is not this so?"

"It is so," answered John Ferrier.

"In return for all this we asked but one condition: that was, that you should embrace the true faith, and conform in every way to its usages. This you promised to do, and this, if common report says truly, you have neglected."

"And how have I neglected it?" asked Ferrier, throwing out his hands in expostulation. "Have I not given to the common fund? Have I not attended at the temple? Have I not"——

"Where are your wives?" asked Young, looking

round him. "Call them in, that I may greet them."

"It is true that I have not married," Ferrier answered. "But women were few, and there were many who had better claims than I. I was not a lonely man; I had my daughter to attend to my wants."

"It is of that daughter that I would speak to you," said the leader of the Mormons. "She has grown to be the flower of Utah, and has found favor in the eyes of many who are high in the land."

John Ferrier groaned internally.

"There are stories of her which I would fain disbelieve—stories that she is sealed to some Gentile. This must be the gossip of idle tongues. What is the thirteenth rule in the code of the sainted Joseph Smith? 'Let every maiden of the true faith marry one of the elect; for if she wed a Gentile, she commits a grievous sin.' This being so, it is impossible that you, who profess the holy creed, should suffer your daughter to violate it."

John Ferrier made no answer, but he played nervously with his riding-whip.

"Upon this one point your whole faith shall be tested—so it has been decided in the Sacred Council of Four. The girl is young, and we would not have her wed gray hairs, neither would we deprive her of all choice. We elders have many heifers,* but our children must also be provided. Stangerson has a son,

*Heber C. Kimball, in one of his sermons, alludes to his hundred wives under this endearing epithet.

and Drebber has a son, and either of them would gladly welcome your daughter to their house. Let her choose between them. They are young and rich, and of the true faith. What say you to that?"

Ferrier remained silent for some little time with his brows knitted.

"You will give us time," he said, at last. "My daughter is very young—she is scarce of an age to marry."

"She shall have a month to choose," said Young, rising from his seat. "At the end of that time she shall give her answer."

He was passing through the door when he turned, with flushed face and flashing eyes.

"It were better for you, John Ferrier," he thundered, "that you and she were now lying blanched skeletons upon the Sierra Blanco, than that you should put your weak wills against the orders of the Holy Four!"

With a threatening gesture of his hand he turned from the door, and Ferrier heard his heavy step scrunching along the shingly path.

He was still sitting with his elbows upon his knees, considering how he should broach the matter to his daughter, when a soft hand was laid upon his, and, looking up, he saw her standing beside him. One glance at her pale, frightened face showed him that she had heard what had passed.

"I could not help it," she said, in answer to his look.

"His voice rang through the house. Oh, father! father! what shall we do?"

"Don't you scare yourself," he answered, drawing her to him and passing his broad, rough hand caressingly over her chestnut hair. "We'll fix it up somehow or another. You don't find your fancy kind o' lessening for this chap, do you?"

A sob and a squeeze of his hand was her only answer.

"No; of course not. I shouldn't care to hear you say you did. He's a likely lad, and he's a Christian, which is more than these folks here, in spite o' all their praying and preaching. There's a party starting for Nevada to-morrow, and I'll manage to send him a message letting him know the hole we are in. If I know anything o' that young man, he'll be back here with a speed that would whip electro-telegraphs."

Lucy laughed through her tears at her father's description.

"When he comes, he will advise us for the best. But it is for you that I am frightened, dear. One hears—one hears such dreadful stories about those who oppose the prophet; something terrible always happens to them."

"But we haven't opposed him yet," her father answered. "It will be time to look out for squalls when we do. We have a clear month before us; at the end of that I guess we had best shin out of Utah."

"Leave Utah?"

"That's about the size of it."

"But the farm?"

"We will raise as much as we can in money, and let the rest go. To tell the truth, Lucy, it isn't the first time I have thought of doing it. I don't care about knuckling under to any man, as these folk do to their darned prophet. I'm a free-born American, and it's all new to me. Guess I'm too old to learn. If he comes browsing about this farm he might chance to run up against a charge of buckshot traveling in the opposite direction."

"But they won't let us leave," his daughter objected.

"Wait till Jefferson comes, and we'll soon manage that. In the meantime, don't you fret yourself, my dearie, and don't get your eyes swelled up, or else he'll be walking into me when he sees you. There's nothing to be afeard about, and there's no danger at all."

John Ferrier uttered these consoling remarks in a very confident tone, but she could not help observing that he paid unusual care to the fastening of the doors that night, and that he carefully cleaned and loaded the rusty old shotgun which hung upon the wall of his bedroom.

CHAPTER IV.

A FLIGHT FOR LIFE.

On the morning which followed his interview with the Mormon prophet, John Ferrier went into Salt Lake City, and having found his acquaintance who was bound for the Nevada Mountains, he intrusted him with his message to Jefferson Hope. In it he told the young man of the imminent danger which threatened them, and how necessary it was that he should return. Having done this, he felt easier in his mind and returned home with a lighter heart.

As he approached his farm he was surprised to see a horse hitched to each of the posts of the gate. Still more surprised was he on entering to find two young men in possession of his sitting-room. One, with a long, pale face, was leaning back in the rocking chair, with his feet cocked up upon the stove. The other, a bull-necked youth, with coarse, bloated features, was standing in front of the window, with his hands in his pockets, whistling a popular hymn. Both of them nodded to Ferrier as he entered, and the one in the rocking chair commenced the conversation.

"Maybe you don't know us," he said. "This here is the son of Elder Drebber, and I'm Joseph Stangerson, who traveled with you in the desert when the Lord stretched out His hand and gathered you into the true fold."

"As he will all the nations, in his own good time," said the other, in a nasal voice; "He grindeth slowly, but exceeding small."

John Ferrier bowed coldly. He had guessed who his visitors were.

"We have come," continued Stangerson, "at the advice of our fathers, to solicit the hand of your daughter for whichever of us may seem good to you and to her. As I have but four wives and Brother Drebber here has seven, it appears to me that my claim is the stronger one."

"Nay, nay, Brother Stangerson," cried the other; "the question is not how many wives we have, but how many we can keep. My father has now given over his mills to me, and I am the richer man."

"But my prospects are better," said the other, warmly. "When the Lord removes my father I shall have his tanning yard and his leather factory. Then I am your elder, and am higher in the church."

"It will be for the maiden to decide," rejoined young Drebber, smirking at his own reflection in the glass. "We will leave it all to her decision."

During this dialogue John Ferrier had stood fum-

ing in the doorway, hardly able to keep his riding-whip from the backs of his two visitors.

"Look here," he said, at last, striding up to them; "when my daughter summons you, you can come; until then, I don't want to see your faces again."

The two young Mormons stared at him in amazement. In their eyes this competition between them for the maiden's hand was the highest of honors both to her and her father.

"There are two ways out of the room," cried Ferrier; "there is the door, and there is the window. Which do you care to use?"

His brown face looked so savage, and his gaunt hands so threatening, that his visitors sprang to their feet and beat a hurried retreat. The old farmer followed them to the door.

"Let me know when you have settled which it is to be," he said, sardonically.

"You shall smart for this!" Stangerson cried, white with rage. "You have defied the prophet and the Council of Four. You shall rue it to the end of your days."

"The hand of the Lord shall be heavy upon you," cried young Drebber; "He will arise and smite you!"

"Then I'll start the smiting," exclaimed Ferrier, furiously, and he would have rushed up stairs for his gun had not Lucy seized him by the arm and restrained him. Before he could escape from her the clatter of

horses' hoofs told him that they were beyond his reach.

"The young canting rascals!" he exclaimed, wiping the perspiration from his forehead; "I would sooner see you in your grave, my girl, than the wife of either of them."

"And so should I, father," she answered, with spirit; "but Jefferson will soon be here."

"Yes; it will not be long before he comes. The sooner the better, for we do not know what their next move may be."

It was, indeed, high time that some one capable of giving advice and help should come to the aid of the sturdy old farmer and his adopted daughter. In the whole history of the settlement there had never been such a case of rank disobedience to the authority of the elders. If minor errors were punished so sternly, what would be the fate of this arch rebel? Ferrier knew that his wealth and position would be of no avail to him. Others as well known and as rich as himself had been spirited away before now, and their goods given over to the church. He was a brave man, but he trembled at the vague, shadowy terrors which hung over him. Any known danger he could face with a firm lip, but this suspense was unnerving. He concealed his fears from his daughter, however, and affected to make light of the whole matter, though she, with the keen eye of love, saw plainly that he was ill at ease.

He expected that he would receive some message or

remonstrance from Young as to his conduct, and he was not mistaken, though it came in an unlooked-for manner. Upon rising next morning he found, to his surprise, a small square of paper pinned on the coverlet of his bed just over his chest. On it was printed, in bold, straggling letters:

"Twenty-nine days are given you for amendment, and then ——"

The dash was more fear-inspiring than any threat could have been. How this warning came into his room puzzled John Ferrier sorely, for his servants slept in an out-house, and the doors and windows had all been secured. He crumpled the paper up and said nothing to his daughter, but the incident struck a chill into his heart. The twenty-nine days were evidently the balance of the month which Young had promised. What strength or courage could avail against an enemy armed with such mysterious powers? The hand which fastened that pin might have struck him to the heart, and he could never have known who had slain him.

Still more shaken was he next morning. They had sat down to their breakfast when Lucy, with a cry of surprise, pointed upward. In the centre of the ceiling was scrawled, with a burned stick apparently, the number 28. To his daughter it was unintelligible, and he did not enlighten her. That night he sat up

with his gun and kept watch and ward. He saw and he heard nothing, and yet in the morning a great 27 had been painted upon the outside of his door.

Thus day followed day; and as sure as morning came he found that his unseen enemies had kept their register, and had marked up in some conspicuous position how many days were still left to him out of the month of grace. Sometimes the fatal numbers appeared upon the walls, sometimes upon the floors; occasionally they were on small placards stuck upon the garden gate or the railings. With all his vigilance John Ferrier could not discover whence these daily warnings proceeded. A horror, which was almost superstitious, came upon him at the sight of them. He became haggard and restless, and his eyes had the troubled look of some haunted creature. He had but one hope in life now, and that was for the arrival of the young hunter from Nevada.

Twenty had changed to fifteen, and fifteen to ten; but there was no news of the absentee. One by one the numbers dwindled down, and still there came no sign of him. Whenever a horseman clattered down the road or a driver shouted at his team, the old farmer hurried to the gate, thinking that help had arrived at last. At last, when he saw five giving way to four, and that again to three, he lost heart and abandoned all hope of escape. Single-handed, and with his limited knowledge of the mountains which surrounded the settlement, he knew that he was powerless. The more

frequented roads were strictly watched and guarded, and none could pass along them without an order from the council. Turn which way he would, there appeared to be no avoiding the blow which hung over him. Yet the old man never wavered in his resolution to part with life itself before he consented to what he regarded as his daughter's dishonor.

He was sitting alone one evening, pondering deeply over his troubles, and searching vainly for some way out of them. That morning had shown the figure 2 upon the wall of his house, and the next day would be the last of the allotted time. What was to happen then? All manner of vague and terrible fancies filled his imagination. And his daughter—what was to become of her after he was gone? Was there no escape from the invisible network which was drawn all around them? He sunk his head upon the table and sobbed at the thought of his own impotence.

What was that? In the silence he heard a gentle scratching sound—low, but very distinct, in the quiet of the night. It came from the door of the house. Ferrier crept into the hall and listened intently. There was a pause for a few moments, and then the low, insidious sound was repeated. Some one was evidently tapping very gently upon one of the panels of the door. Was it some midnight assassin who had come to carry out the murderous order of the secret tribunal? Or was it some agent who was marking up that the last day of grace had arrived? John Ferrier felt that in-

stant death would be better than the suspense which shook his nerves and chilled his heart. Springing forward, he drew the bolt and threw the door open.

Outside all was calm and quiet. The night was fine, and the stars were twinkling brightly overhead. The little front garden lay before the farmer's eyes, bounded by the fence and gate; but neither there nor on the road was any human being to be seen. With a sigh of relief Ferrier looked to right and to left, until, happening to glance straight down at his feet, he saw, to his astonishment, a man lying flat upon his face upon the ground, with his arms and legs all asprawl.

So unnerved was he at the sight that he leaned up against the wall with his hand to his throat to stifle his inclination to call out. His first thought was that the prostrate figure was that of some wounded or dying man, but as he watched it he saw it writhe along the ground and into the hall with the rapidity and noiselessness of a serpent. Once within the house the man sprung to his feet, closed the door, and revealed to the astonished farmer the fierce face and resolute expression of Jefferson Hope.

"Good God!" gasped John Ferrier. "How you scared me! What ever made you come in like that?"

"Give me food," the other said, hoarsely. "I have had no time for bite or sup for eight-and-forty hours." He flung himself upon the cold meat and bread which were still lying upon the table from his host's supper, and devoured them voraciously. "Does Lucy bear

up well?" he asked, when he had satisfied his hunger.

"Yes; she does not know the danger," her father answered.

"That is well. The house is watched on every side. That is why I crawled my way up to it. They may be darned sharp, but they're not quite sharp enough to catch a Washoe hunter."

John Ferrier felt a different man now that he realized that he had a devoted ally. He seized the young man's leathery hand and wrung it cordially.

"You're a man to be proud of," he said. "There are not many who would come to share our danger and our troubles."

"You've hit it there, pard," the young hunter answered. "I have a respect for you, but if you were alone in this business I'd think twice before I put my head into such a hornets' nest. It's Lucy that brings me here, and before harm comes on her I guess there will be one less o' the Hope family in Utah."

"What are we to do?"

"To-morrow is your last day, and unless you act to-night you are lost. I have a mule and two horses waiting in the Eagle Ravine. How much money have you?"

"Two thousand dollars in gold, and five in notes."

"That will do. I have as much more to add to it. We must push for Carson City through the mountains. You had best wake Lucy. It is as well that the servants do not sleep in the house."

While Ferrier was absent preparing his daughter for the approaching journey, Jefferson Hope packed all the eatables that he could find into a small parcel, and filled a stoneware jar with water, for he knew by experience that the mountain wells were few and far between. He had hardly completed his arrangements before the farmer returned with his daughter, all dressed and ready for a start. The greeting between the lovers was warm but brief, for minutes were precious, and there was much to be done.

"We must make our start at once," said Jefferson Hope, speaking in a low but resolute voice, like one who realizes the greatness of the peril, but has steeled his heart to meet it. "The front and back entrances are watched, but with caution we may get away through the side window and across the fields. Once on the road, we are only two miles from the ravine where the horses are waiting. By daybreak we should be half-way through the mountains."

"What if we are stopped?" asked Ferrier.

Hope slapped the revolver butt which protruded from the front of his tunic.

"If they are too many for us, we shall take two or three of them with us," he said, with a sinister smile.

The lights inside the house had all been extinguished, and from the darkened window Ferrier peered over the fields which had been his own, and which he was now about to abandon forever. He had long nerved himself to the sacrifice, however, and the

thought of the honor and happiness of his daughter outweighed any regret at his ruined fortunes. All looked so peaceful and happy, the rustling trees and the broad, silent stretch of grain land, that it was difficult to realize that the spirit of murder lurked through it all. Yet the white face and set expression of the young hunter showed that in his approach to the house he had seen enough to satisfy him upon that head.

Ferrier carried the bag of gold and notes, Jefferson Hope had the scanty provisions and water, while Lucy had a small bundle containing a few of her more valued possessions. Opening the window very slowly and carefully, they waited until a dark cloud had somewhat obscured the night, and then one by one passed through into the little garden. With bated breath and crouching figures they stumbled across it and gained the shelter of the hedge, which they skirted until they came to the gap which opened into the cornfield. They had just reached this point when the young man seized his two companions and dragged them down into the shadow, where they lay silent and trembling.

It was as well that his prairie training had given Jefferson Hope the ears of a lynx. He and his friends had hardly crouched down before the melancholy hooting of a mountain owl was heard within a few yards of them, which was immediately answered by another hoot at a small distance. At the same moment a vague, shadowy figure emerged from the gap

for which they had been making, and uttered the plaintive signal cry again, on which a second man appeared out of the obscurity.

"To-morrow at midnight," said the first, who appeared to be in authority. "When the whip-poor-will calls three times."

"It is well," returned the other. "Shall I tell Brother Drebber?"

"Pass it on to him, and from him to the others. Nine to seven!"

"Seven to five!" repeated the other, and the two figures flitted away in different directions. Their concluding words had evidently been some form of sign and countersign. The instant that their footsteps had died away in the distance Jefferson Hope sprang to his feet, and, helping his companions through the gap, led the way across the fields at full speed, supporting and half carrying the girl when her strength appeared to fail her.

"Hurry on! hurry on!" he gasped from time to time. "We are through the line of sentinels. Everything depends on speed. Hurry on!"

Once on the high-road they made rapid progress. Only once did they meet any one, and then they managed to slip into a field, and so avoid recognition. Before reaching the town the hunter branched away into a rugged and narrow footpath which led to the mountains. Two dark, jagged peaks loomed above them through the darkness, and the defile which led between

them was the Eagle Ravine, in which the horses were awaiting them. With unerring instinct Jefferson Hope picked his way among the great bowlders and along the bed of a dried-up watercourse, until he came to the retired corner, screened with rocks, where the faithful animals had been picketed. The girl was placed upon the mule and old Ferrier upon one of the horses, with his money-bag, while Jefferson Hope led the other along the precipitous and dangerous paths.

It was a bewildering route for any one who was not accustomed to face Nature in her wildest moods. On the one side a great crag towered up a thousand feet or more, black, stern, and menacing, with long basaltic columns upon his rugged surface like the ribs of some petrified monster. On the other hand, a wild chaos of bowlders and debris made all advance impossible. Between the two ran the irregular track, so narrow in places that they had to travel in Indian file, and so rough that only practiced riders could have traversed it at all. Yet, in spite of all dangers and difficulties, the hearts of the fugitives were light within them, for every step increased the distance between them and the terrible despotism from which they were flying.

They soon had a proof, however, that they were still within the jurisdiction of the Saints. They had reached the very wildest and most desolate portion of the pass, when the girl gave a startled cry and pointed upward. On a rock which overlooked the track, showing out dark and plain against the sky, there stood a

solitary sentinel. He saw them as soon as they perceived him, and his military challenge of "Who goes there?" rang through the silent ravine.

"Travelers for Nevada," said Jefferson Hope, with his hand upon the rifle which hung by his saddle.

They could see the lonely watcher fingering his gun, and peering down at them as if dissatisfied at their reply.

"By whose permission?" he asked.

"The Holy Four," answered Ferrier. His Mormon experiences had taught him that that was the highest authority to which he could refer.

"Nine to seven," cried the sentinel.

"Seven to five," returned Jefferson Hope promptly, remembering the countersign which he had heard in the garden.

"Pass, and the Lord go with you," said the voice from above.

Beyond this post the path broadened out, and the horses were able to break into a trot. Looking back, they could see the solitary watcher leaning upon his gun, and knew that they had passed the outlying post of the Chosen People, and that freedom lay before them.

CHAPTER V.

THE AVENGING ANGELS.

All night long their course lay through intricate defiles and over irregular and rock-strewn paths. More than once they lost their way, but Hope's intimate knowledge of the mountains enabled them to regain the track once more. When morning broke a scene of marvelous though savage beauty lay before them. In every direction the great snow-capped peaks hemmed them in, peeping over one another's shoulders to the far horizon. So steep were the rocky banks on either side of them that the larch and the pine seemed to be suspended over their heads, and to need only a gust of wind to come hurtling down upon them. Nor was the fear entirely an illusion, for the barren valley was thickly strewn with trees and bowlders which had fallen in a similar manner. Even as they passed a great rock came thundering down with a hoarse rattle which woke the echoes in the silent gorges, and startled the weary horses into a gallop.

As the sun rose slowly above the eastern horizon the caps of the great mountains lighted up one after the

other, like lamps at a festival, until they were all ruddy and glowing. The magnificent spectacle cheered the hearts of the three fugitives and gave them fresh energy. At a wild torrent which swept out of a ravine they called a halt and watered their horses, while they partook of a hasty breakfast. Lucy and her father would fain have rested longer, but Jefferson Hope was inexorable.

"They will be upon our track by this time," he said. "Everything depends upon our speed. Once safe in Carson, we may rest for the remainder of our lives."

During the whole of that day they struggled on through the defiles, and by evening they calculated that they were over thirty miles from their enemies. At night-time they chose the base of a beetling crag, where the rocks offered some protection from the chill wind, and there, huddled together for warmth, they enjoyed a few hours' sleep. Before daybreak, however, they were up and on their way once more. They had seen no signs of any pursuers, and Jefferson Hope began to think that they were fairly out of the reach of the terrible organization whose enmity they had incurred. He little knew how far that iron grasp could reach, or how soon it was to close upon them and crush them.

About the middle of the second day of their flight their scanty store of provisions began to run out. This gave the hunter little uneasiness, for there was game to be had among the mountains, and he had frequently

before had to depend upon his rifle for the needs of life. Choosing a sheltered nook he piled together a few dry branches and made a blazing fire, at which his companions might warm themselves, for they were now nearly five thousand feet above the sea-level, and the air was bitter and keen. Having tethered the horses and bid Lucy adieu, he threw his gun over his shoulder and set out in search of whatever chance might throw in his way. Looking back, he saw the old man and the young girl crouching over the blazing fire, while the three animals stood motionless in the background. Then the intervening rocks hid them from his view.

He walked for a couple of miles through one ravine after another without success, though from the marks upon the bark of the trees and other indications he judged that there were numerous bears in the vicinity. At last, after two or three hours' fruitless search, he was thinking of turning back in despair, when, casting his eyes upward, he saw a sight which sent a thrill of pleasure through his heart. On the edge of a jutting pinnacle, three or four hundred feet above him, there stood a creature somewhat resembling a sheep in appearance, but armed with a pair of gigantic horns. The big-horn—for so it is called—was acting, probably, as a guardian over a flock which were invisible to the hunter; but fortunately it was heading in the opposite direction, and had not perceived him. Lying on his back, he rested his rifle on a rock and took a

long and steady aim before drawing the trigger. The animal sprang into the air, tottered for a moment upon the edge of the precipice, and then came crashing down into the valley beneath.

The creature was too unwieldy to lift, so the hunter contented himself with cutting away one haunch and part of the flank. With this trophy over his shoulder, he hastened to retrace his steps, for the evening was already drawing in. He had hardly started, however, before he realized the difficulty which faced him. In his eagerness he had wandered far past the ravines which were known to him, and it was no easy matter to pick out the path which he had taken. The valley in which he found himself divided and subdivided into many gorges, which were so like one another that it was impossible to distinguish one from the other. He followed one for a mile or more until he came to a mountain torrent which he was sure that he had never seen before. Convinced that he had taken the wrong turn, he tried another, but with the same result. Night was coming on rapidly, and it was almost dark before he at last found himself in a defile which was familiar to him. Even then it was no easy matter to keep to the right track, for the moon had not yet risen and the high cliffs on either side made the obscurity more profound. Weighed down with his burden, and weary from his exertions, he stumbled along, keeping up his heart by the reflection that every step brought him nearer to Lucy, and that he carried with him

enough to insure them food for the remainder of the journey.

He had now come to the mouth of the very defile in which he had left them. Even in the darkness he could recognize the outlines of the cliffs which bounded it. They must, he reflected, be awaiting him anxiously, for he had been absent nearly five hours. In the gladness of his heart he put his hands to his mouth and made the glen re-echo to a loud halloo as a signal that he was coming. He paused and listened for an answer. None came save his own cry, which clattered up the dreary, silent ravines, and was borne back to his ears in countless repetitions. Again he shouted, even louder than before, and again no whisper came back from the friends whom he had left such a short time ago. A vague, nameless dread came over him, and he hurried onward frantically, dropping the precious food in his agitation.

When he turned the corner he came in full sight of the spot where the fire had been lighted. There was still a glowing pile of wood-ashes there, but it had evidently not been tended since his departure. The same dead silence still reigned all round. With his fears all changed to convictions, he hurried on. There was no living creature near the remains of the fire; animals, man, maiden, all were gone. It was only too clear that some sudden and terrible disaster had occurred during his absence—a disaster which had embraced them all and yet had left no traces behind it.

Bewildered and stunned by this blow, Jefferson Hope felt his head spin round, and had to lean upon his rifle to save himself from falling. He was essentially a man of action, however, and speedily recovered from his temporary impotence. Seizing a half-consumed piece of wood from the smoldering fire he blew it into a flame, and proceeded with its help to examine the little camp. The ground was all stamped down by the feet of horses, showing that a large party of mounted men had overtaken the fugitives, and the direction of their tracks proved that they had afterward turned back to Salt Lake City. Had they carried back both of his companions with them? Jefferson Hope had almost persuaded himself that they must have done so, when his eye fell upon an object which made every nerve of his body tingle within him. A little way on one side of the camp was a low-lying heap of reddish soil, which had assuredly not been there before. There was no mistaking it for anything but a newly dug grave. As the young hunter approached it he perceived that a stick had been planted on it, with a sheet of paper stuck in the cleft fork of it. The inscription on the paper was brief, but to the point:

JOHN FERRIER,
FORMERLY OF SALT LAKE CITY.
Died August 4, 1860.

The sturdy old man, whom he had left so short a

time before, was gone, then, and this was all his epitaph. Jefferson Hope looked wildly round to see if there was a second grave, but there was no sign of one. Lucy had been carried back by their terrible pursuers to fulfil her original destiny, by becoming one of the harem of the elder's son. As the young fellow realized the certainty of her fate and his own powerlessness to prevent it, he wished that he, too, was lying with the old farmer in his last silent resting-place.

Again, however, his active spirit shook off the lethargy which springs from despair. If there was nothing else left to him he could at least devote his life to revenge. With indomitable patience and perseverance, Jefferson Hope possessed also a power of sustained vindictiveness which he may have learned from the Indians among whom he had lived. As he stood by the desolate fire he felt that the only one thing which could assuage his grief would be a thorough and complete retribution brought by his own hand upon his enemies. His strong will and untiring energy should, he determined, be devoted to that one end. With a grim, white face, he retraced his steps to where he had dropped the food, and, having stirred up the smoldering fire, he cooked enough to last him for a few days. This he made up into a bundle, and, tired as he was, he set himself to walk back through the mountains upon the track of the Avenging Angels.

For five days he toiled, footsore and weary, through the defiles which he had already traversed on horse-

back. At night he flung himself down among the rocks and snatched a few hours of sleep; but before daybreak he was always well on his way. On the sixth day he reached the Eagle Ravine, from which they had commenced their ill-fated flight. Thence he could look down upon the home of the Saints. Worn and exhausted, he leaned upon his rifle and shook his gaunt hand fiercely at the silent, widespread city beneath him. As he looked at it he observed that there were flags in some of the principal streets, and other signs of festivity. He was still speculating as to what this might mean when he heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs and saw a mounted man riding toward him. As he approached he recognized him as a Mormon named Cowper, to whom he had rendered services at different times. He therefore accosted him when he got up to him, with the object of finding out what Lucy Ferrier's fate had been.

"I am Jefferson Hope," he said. "You remember me?"

The Mormon looked at him with undisguised astonishment. Indeed, it was difficult to recognize in this tattered, unkempt wanderer, with ghastly white face and fierce, wild eyes, the spruce young hunter of former days. Having, however, at last satisfied himself as to his identity, the man's surprise changed to consternation.

"You are mad to come here," he cried. "It is as much as my own life is worth to be seen talking with

you. There is a warrant against you from the Holy Four for assisting the Ferriers away."

"I don't fear them or their warrant," Hope said, earnestly. "You must know something of this matter, Cowper. I conjure you by everything you hold dear to answer a few questions. We have always been friends. For God's sake, don't refuse to answer me."

"What is it?" the Mormon asked, uneasily. "Be quick; the very rocks have ears and the trees eyes!"

"What has become of Lucy Ferrier?"

"She was married yesterday to young Drebber. Hold up, man! hold up! you have no life left in you!"

"Don't mind me," said Hope, faintly. He was white to the very lips, and had sunk down on the stone against which he had been leaning. "Married, you say?"

"Married yesterday—that's what those flags are for on the Endowment House. There was some words between young Drebber and young Stangerson as to which was to have her. They'd both been in the party that followed them, and Stangerson had shot her father, which seemed to give him the best claim; but when they argued it out in council Drebber's party was the stronger, so the prophet gave her over to him. No one won't have her very long, though, for I saw death in her face yesterday. She is more like a ghost than a woman. Are you off, then?"

"Yes, I'm off," said Jefferson Hope, who had risen from his seat.

His face might have been chiseled out of marble, so hard and so set was its expression, while his eyes glowed with a baleful light.

"Where are you going?"

"Never mind," he answered; and, slinging his weapon on his shoulder, strode off down the gorge and so away into the heart of the mountains, to the haunts of the wild beasts. Among them all there was none so fierce and so dangerous as himself.

The prediction of the Mormon was only too well fulfilled. Whether it was the terrible death of her father or the effects of the hateful marriage into which she had been forced, poor Lucy never held up her head again, but pined away and died within a month. Her sottish husband, who had married her principally for the sake of John Ferrier's property, did not affect any great grief at his bereavement; but his other wives mourned over her, and sat up with her the night before the burial, as is the Mormon custom. They were grouped round the bier in the early hours of the morning, when, to their inexpressible fear and astonishment, the door was flung open, and a savage-looking, weather-beaten man in tattered garments strode into the room. Without a glance or a word to the cowering women he walked up to the white, silent figure which had once contained the pure soul of Lucy Ferrier. Stooping over her, he pressed his lips reverently to her cold forehead, and then, snatching up her hand, he took the wedding-ring from her finger.

"She shall not be buried in that," he cried, with a fierce snarl, and before an alarm could be raised sprang down the stairs and was gone. So strange and so brief was the episode that the watchers might have found it hard to believe it themselves or persuade other people of it, had it not been for the undeniable fact that the circlet of gold which marked her as having been a bride had disappeared.

For some months Jefferson Hope lingered among the mountains, leading a strange, wild life, and nursing in his heart the fierce desire for vengeance which possessed him. Tales were told in the city of the weird figure which was seen prowling about the suburbs, and which haunted the lonely mountain gorges. Once a bullet whistled through Stangerson's window and flattened itself upon the wall within a foot of him. On another occasion, as Drebber passed under a cliff, a great bowlder crashed down on him, and he only escaped a terrible death by throwing himself upon his face. The two young Mormons were not long in discovering the reason of these attempts upon their lives, and led repeated expeditions into the mountains in the hope of capturing or killing their enemy, but always without success. Then they adopted the precaution of never going out alone or after nightfall, and of having their houses guarded. After a time they were able to relax these measures, for nothing was either heard or seen of their opponent, and they hoped that time had cooled his vindictiveness.

Far from doing so, it had, if anything, augmented it. The hunter's mind was of a hard, unyielding nature, and the predominant idea of revenge had taken such complete possession of it that there was no room for any other emotion. He was, however, above all things practical. He soon realized that even his iron constitution could not stand the incessant strain which he was putting upon it. Exposure and want of wholesome food were wearing him out. If he died like a dog among the mountains, what was to become of his revenge then? And yet such a death was sure to overtake him if he persisted. He felt that that was to play his enemy's game, so he reluctantly returned to the old Nevada mines, there to recruit his health and to amass money enough to allow him to pursue his object without privation.

His intention had been to be absent a year at the most, but a combination of unforeseen circumstances prevented his leaving the mines for nearly five. At the end of that time, however, his memory of his wrongs and his cravings for revenge were quite as keen as on that memorable night when he had stood by John Ferrier's grave. Disguised, and under an assumed name, he returned to Salt Lake City, careless what became of his own life as long as he obtained what he knew to be justice. There he found evil tidings awaiting him. There had been a schism among the Chosen People a few months before, some of the younger members of the church having rebelled

against the authority of the elders, and the result had been the secession of a certain number of the malcontents, who had left Utah and become Gentiles. Among these had been Drebber and Stangerson, and no one knew whither they had gone. Rumor reported that Drebber had managed to convert a large part of his property into money, and that he had departed a wealthy man, while his companion, Stangerson, was comparatively poor. There was no clue at all, however, as to their whereabouts.

Many a man, however vindictive, would have abandoned all thought of revenge in the face of such a difficulty, but Jefferson Hope never faltered for a moment. With the small competence he possessed, eked out by such employment as he could pick up, he traveled from town to town through the United States in quest of his enemies. Year passed into year, his black hair turned to grizzled, but still he wandered on, a human bloodhound, with his mind wholly set upon the one object to which he had devoted his life. At last his perseverance was rewarded. It was but a glance of a face in a window, but that one glance told him that Cleveland, in Ohio, possessed the men whom he was in pursuit of. He returned to his miserable lodgings with his plan of vengeance all arranged. It chanced, however, that Drebber, looking from his window, had recognized the vagrant in the street, and had read murder in his eyes. He hurried before a justice of the peace, accompanied by Stangerson, who had become

his private secretary, and represented to him that they were in danger of their lives from the jealousy and hatred of an old rival.

That evening Jefferson Hope was taken into custody, and, not being able to find sureties, was detained for some weeks. When at last he was liberated it was only to find that Drebber's house was deserted, and that he and his secretary had departed for Europe.

Again the avenger had been foiled, and again his concentrated hatred urged him to continue the pursuit. Funds were wanting, however, and for some time he had to return to work, saving every dollar for his approaching journey. At last, having collected enough to keep life in him, he departed for Europe, and tracked his enemies from city to city, working his way in any menial capacity, but never overtaking the fugitives. When he reached St. Petersburg they had departed for Paris; and when he followed them there he learned that they had just set off for Copenhagen. At the Danish capital he was again a few days late, for they had journeyed on to London, where he at last succeeded in running them to earth. As to what occurred there, we cannot do better than quote the old hunter's own account, as duly recorded in Dr. Watson's journal, to which we are already under such obligations.

CHAPTER VI.

A CONTINUATION OF THE REMINISCENCES OF JOHN H. WATSON, M. D.

Our prisoner's furious resistance did not apparently indicate any ferocity in his disposition toward ourselves, for, on finding himself powerless, he smiled in an affable manner, and expressed his hopes that he had not hurt any of us in the scuffle.

"I guess you're going to take me to the police station," he remarked to Sherlock Holmes. "My cab's at the door; if you'll loose my legs I'll walk down to it. I'm not so light to lift as I used to be."

Gregson and Lestrade exchanged glances as if they thought this proposition rather a bold one; but Holmes at once took the prisoner at his word, and loosened the towel which he had bound round his ankles. He rose and stretched his legs, as though to assure himself that they were free once more. I remember that I thought to myself, as I eyed him, that I had seldom seen a more powerfully built man; and his dark, sunburned face bore an expression of determination and energy which was as formidable as his personal strength.

"If there's a vacant place for a chief of the police, I reckon you are the man for it," he said, gazing with undisguised admiration at my fellow-lodger. "The way you kept on my trail was a caution."

"You had better come with me," said Holmes to the two detectives.

"I can drive you," said Lestrade.

"Good! and Gregson can come inside with me. You too, doctor; you have taken an interest in the case, and may as well stick to us."

I assented gladly, and we all descended together. Our prisoner made no attempt at escape, but stepped calmly into the cab which had been his, and we followed him. Lestrade mounted the box, whipped up the horse, and brought us in a very short time to our destination. We were ushered into a small chamber, where a police inspector noted down our prisoner's name and the names of the men with whose murder he had been charged. The official was a white-faced, unemotional man, who went through his duties in a dull, mechanical way. "The prisoner will be put before the magistrates in the course of the week," he said; "in the meantime, Mr. Jefferson Hope, have you anything that you wish to say? I must warn you that your words will be taken down and may be used against you."

"I've got a good deal to say," our prisoner said, slowly. "I want to tell you gentlemen all about it."

"Hadn't you better reserve that for your trial?" asked the inspector.

"I may never be tried," he answered. "You needn't look startled. It isn't suicide I am thinking of. Are you a doctor?"

He turned his fierce, dark eyes upon me as he asked this last question.

"Yes, I am," I answered.

"Then put your hand here," he said, with a smile, motioning with his manacled wrists toward his chest.

I did so, and became at once conscious of an extraordinary throbbing and commotion which was going on inside. The walls of his chest seemed to thrill and quiver as a frail building would do inside when some powerful engine was at work. In the silence of the room I could hear a dull humming and buzzing noise which proceeded from the same source.

"Why," I cried, you have aortic aneurism!"

"That's what they call it," he said, placidly. "I went to a doctor last week about it, and he told me that it was bound to burst before many days passed. It has been getting worse for years. I got it from over-exposure and underfeeding among the Salt Lake mountains. I've done my work now, and I don't care how soon I go, but I should like to leave some account of the business behind me. I don't want to be remembered as a common cut-throat."

The inspector and the two detectives had a hurried

discussion as to the advisability of allowing him to tell his story.

"Do you consider, doctor, that there is immediate danger?" the former asked.

"Most certainly there is," I answered.

"In that case it is clearly our duty, in the interests of justice, to take his statement," said the inspector. "You are at liberty, sir, to give your account, which I again warn you will be taken down."

"I'll sit down, with your leave," the prisoner said, suiting the action to the word. "This aneurism of mine makes me easily tired, and the tussle we had half an hour ago has not mended matters. I'm on the brink of the grave, and I am not likely to lie to you. Every word I say is the absolute truth, and how you use it is a matter of no consequence to me."

With these words Jefferson Hope leaned back in his chair and began the following remarkable statement. He spoke in a calm and methodical manner, as though the events which he narrated were commonplace enough. I can vouch for the accuracy of the subjoined account, for I have had access to Lestrade's note book, in which the prisoner's words were taken down exactly as they were uttered.

"It doesn't matter much to you why I hated these men," he said; "it's enough that they were guilty of the death of two human beings—a father and a daughter—and they had, therefore, forfeited their own lives. After the lapse of time that has passed since their

crime, it was impossible for me to secure a conviction against them in any court. I knew of their guilt, though, and I determined that I should be judge, jury, and executioner all rolled into one. You'd have done the same, if you have any manhood in you, if you had been in my place.

"That girl that I spoke of was to have married me twenty years ago. She was forced into marrying that same Drebber, and broke her heart over it. I took the marriage ring from her dead finger, and I vowed that his dying eyes should rest upon that very ring, and that his last thought should be of the crime for which he was punished. I have carried it about with me, and have followed him and his accomplice over two continents until I caught them. They thought to tire me out, but they could not do it. If I die to-morrow, as is likely enough, I die knowing that my work in this world is done, and well done. They have perished, and by my hand. There is nothing left for me to hope for or to desire.

"They were rich and I was poor, so that it was no easy matter for me to follow them. When I got to London my pocket was about empty, and I found that I must turn my hand to something for my living. Driving and riding are as natural to me as walking, so I applied at a cab owner's office and soon got employment. I was to bring a certain sum a week to the owner, and whatever was over that I might keep for myself. There was seldom much over, but I man-

aged to scrape along somehow. The hardest job was to learn my way about, for I reckon that of all the mazes that were ever contrived, this city is the most confusing. I had a map beside me, though, and when once I had spotted the principal hotels and stations I got on pretty well.

"It was some time before I found out where my two gentlemen were living; but I inquired and inquired until at last I dropped across them. They were at a boarding house at Camberwell, over on the other side of the river. When once I found them out I knew that I had them at my mercy. I had grown my beard, and there was no chance of their recognizing me. I would dog them and follow them until I saw my opportunity. I was determined that they should not escape me again.

"They were very near doing it, for all that. Go where they would about London, I was always at their heels. Sometimes I followed them on my cab, and sometimes on foot, but the former was the best, for then they could not get away from me. It was only early in the morning or late at night that I could earn anything, so that I began to get behindhand with my employer. I did not mind that, however, as long as I could lay my hand upon the men I wanted.

"They were very cunning, though. They must have thought that there was some chance of their being followed, for they would never go out alone, and never after nightfall. During two weeks I drove be-

hind them every day, and never once saw them separate. Drebber himself was drunk half the time, but Stangerson was not to be caught napping. I watched them late and early, but never saw the ghost of a chance; but I was not discouraged, for something told me that the hour had almost come. My only fear was that this thing in my chest might burst a little too soon and leave my work undone.

"At last, one evening, I was driving up and down Torquay Terrace, as the street was called in which they boarded, when I saw a cab drive up to their door. Presently some luggage was brought out, and after a time Drebber and Stangerson followed it and drove off. I whipped up my horse and kept within sight of them, feeling ill at ease, for I feared that they were going to shift their quarters. At Euston Station they got out, and I left a boy to hold my horse and followed them on to the platform. I heard them ask for the Liverpool train, and the guard answer that one had just gone, and there would not be another for some hours. Stangerson seemed to be put out at that, but Drebber was rather pleased than otherwise. I got so close to them in the bustle that I could hear every word that passed between them. Drebber said that he had a little business of his own to do, and that if the other would wait for him he would soon rejoin him. His companion remonstrated with him, and reminded him that they had resolved to stick together. Drebber answered that the matter was a delicate one, and that

he must go alone. I could not catch what Stangerson said to that, but the other burst out swearing and reminded him that he was nothing more than his paid servant, and that he must not presume to dictate to him. On that the secretary gave it up as a bad job, and simply bargained with him that if he missed the last train he should rejoin him at Halliday's Private Hotel; to which Drebber answered that he would be back on the platform before eleven, and made his way out of the station.

"The moment for which I had waited so long had at last come. I had my enemies within my power. Together they could protect each other, but singly they were at my mercy. I did not act, however, with undue precipitation. My plans were already formed. There is no satisfaction in vengeance unless the offender has time to realize who it is that strikes him, and why retribution had come upon him. I had my plans arranged by which I should have the opportunity of making the man who wronged me understand that his old sin had found him out. It chanced that some days before a gentleman who had been engaged in looking over some houses in the Brixton Road had dropped the key of one of them in my carriage. It was claimed that same evening and returned; but in the interval I had taken a molding of it, and had a duplicate constructed. By means of this I had access to at least one spot in this great city where I could rely upon being free from interruption. How to get Drebber to that

house was the difficult problem which I now had to solve.

"He walked down the road and went into one or two liquor shops, staying for nearly half an hour in the last of them. When he came out he staggered in his walk, and was evidently pretty well on. There was a hansom just in front of me, and he hailed it. I followed it so close that the nose of my horse was within a yard of his driver the whole way. We rattled across Waterloo Bridge and through miles of streets, until, to my astonishment, we found ourselves back in the terrace in which he had boarded. I could not imagine what his intention was in returning there, but I went on and pulled up my cab a hundred yards or so from the house. He entered it and his hansom drove away. Give me a glass of water, if you please. My mouth gets dry with the talking."

I handed him the glass, and he drank it down.

"That's better," he said. "Well, I waited for a quarter of an hour or more, when suddenly there came a noise like people struggling inside the house. Next moment the door was flung open and two men appeared, one of whom was Drebber, and the other was a young chap whom I had never seen before. This fellow had Drebber by the collar, and when they came to the head of the steps he gave him a shove and a kick which sent him half across the road. 'You hound!' he cried, shaking his stick at him, 'I'll teach you to insult an honest girl!' He was so hot that I think he

would have thrashed Drebber with his cudgel only that the cur staggered away down the road as fast as his legs would carry him. He ran as far as the corner, and then, seeing my cab, he hailed me and jumped in. 'Drive me to Halliday's Private Hotel,' said he.

"When I had him fairly inside my cab my heart jumped so with joy that I feared lest at this last moment my aneurism might go wrong. I drove along slowly, weighing in my own mind what it was best to do. I might take him right out into the country, and there in some deserted lane have my last interview with him. I had almost decided upon this, when he solved the problem for me. The craze for drink had seized him again, and he ordered me to pull up outside a gin palace. He went in, leaving word that I should wait for him. There he remained until closing time, and when he came out he was so far gone that I knew the game was in my own hands.

"Don't imagine that I intended to kill him in cold blood. It would only have been rigid justice if I had done so, but I could not bring myself to do it. I had long determined that he should have a show for his life if he chose to take advantage of it. Among the many billets which I have filled in America during my wandering life, I was once a janitor and sweeper-out of the laboratory at York College. One day the professor was lecturing on poisons, and he showed his students some alkaloid, as he called it, which he had extracted from some South American arrow poison, and which

was so powerful that the least grain meant instant death. I spotted the bottle in which this preparation was kept, and when they were all gone I helped myself to a little of it. I was a fairly good dispenser, so I worked this alkaloid into small, soluble pills, and each pill I put in a box with a similar pill made without poison. I determined at the time that, when I had my chance, my gentlemen should each have a draw out of one of these boxes, while I eat the pill that remained. It would be quite as deadly, and a good deal less noisy than firing across a handkerchief. From that day I had always my pill boxes about with me, and the time had now come when I was to use them.

"It was nearer one than twelve, and a wild, bleak night, blowing hard and raining in torrents. Dismal as it was outside, I was glad within—so glad that I could have shouted out from pure exultation. If any of you gentlemen have ever pined for a thing and longed for it during twenty long years, and then suddenly found it within your reach, you would understand my feelings. I lighted a cigar and puffed at it to steady my nerves, but my hands were trembling, and my temples throbbing with excitement. As I drove I could see old John Ferrier and sweet Lucy looking at me out of the darkness and smiling at me, just as plain as I see you all in this room. All the way they were ahead of me, one on each side of the horse, until I pulled up at the house in the Brixton Road.

"There was not a soul to be seen, nor a sound to be

heard, except the dripping of the rain. When I looked in at the window I found Drebber all huddled together in a drunken sleep. I shook him by the arm: 'It's time to go out,' I said.

" 'All right, cabby,' said he.

"I suppose he thought we had come to the hotel that he had mentioned, for he got out without another word and followed me down the garden. I had to walk beside him to keep him steady, for he was still a little top-heavy. When we came to the door I opened it and led him into the front room. I give you my word that, all the way, the father and daughter were walking in front of us.

" 'It's infernally dark,' said he, stamping about.

" 'We'll soon have a light,' I said, striking a match and putting it to a wax candle which I had brought with me. 'Now, Enoch Drebber,' I continued, turning to him and holding the light to my own face, 'Who am I?'

"He gazed at me with bleared, drunken eyes for a moment, and then I saw a horror spring up in them and convulse his whole features, which showed me that he knew me. He staggered back with a livid face, and I saw the perspiration break out upon his brow, while his teeth chattered. At the sight I leaned my back against the door and laughed loud and long. I had always known that vengeance would be sweet, but had never hoped for the contentment of soul which now possessed me.

"'You dog!' I said, 'I have hunted you from Salt Lake City to St. Petersburg, and you have always escaped me. Now at last your wanderings have come to an end, for either you or I shall never see to-morrow's sun rise.' He shrunk still further away as I spoke, and I could see on his face that he thought I was mad. So I was, for the time. The pulses in my temples beat like sledge-hammers, and I believe I would have had a fit of some sort if the blood had not gushed from my nose and relieved me.

"'What do you think of Lucy Ferrier now?' I cried, locking the door and shaking the key in his face. 'Punishment has been slow in coming, but it has overtaken you at last.' I saw his coward lips tremble as I spoke. He would have begged for his life, but he knew well that it was useless.

"'Would you murder me?' he stammered.

"'There is no murder,' I answered. 'Who talks of murdering a mad dog? What mercy had you upon my poor darling when you dragged her from her slaughtered father and bore her away to your accursed and shameless harem?'

"'It was not I who killed her father,' he cried.

"'But it was you who broke her innocent heart,' I shrieked, thrusting the box before him. 'Let the high God judge between us. Choose and eat. There is death in one and life in the other. I shall take what you leave. Let us see if there is justice upon the earth, or if we are ruled by chance.'

"He cowered away with wild cries and prayers for mercy, but I drew my knife and held it to his throat until he had obeyed me. Then I swallowed the other, and we stood facing each other in silence for a minute or more, waiting to see which was to live and which was to die. Shall I ever forget the look which came over his face when the first warning pangs told him that the poison was in his system? I laughed as I saw it, and held Lucy's marriage-ring in front of his eyes. It was but for a moment, for the action of the alkaloid is rapid. A spasm of pain contorted his features; he threw his hands out in front of him, staggered, and then, with a hoarse cry, fell heavily upon the floor. I turned him over with my foot and placed my hand upon his heart. There was no movement. He was dead!

"The blood had been streaming from my nose, but I had taken no notice of it. I don't know what it was that put it into my head to write upon the wall with it. Perhaps it was some mischievous idea of setting the police upon a wrong track, for I felt light-hearted and cheerful. I remembered a German being found in New York with 'Rache' written up above him, and it was argued at the time in the newspapers that the secret societies must have done it. I guessed that what puzzled the New Yorkers would puzzle the Londoners, so I dipped my finger in my own blood and printed it on a convenient place on the wall. Then I walked down to my cab and found that there was no-

body about, and that the night was still very wild. I had driven some distance, when I put my hand into the pocket in which I usually kept Lucy's ring, and found that it was not there. I was thunder-struck at this, for it was the only memento that I had of her. Thinking that I might have dropped it when I stooped over Drebber's body, I drove back, and leaving my cab in a side street, I went boldly up to the house—for I was ready to dare anything rather than lose the ring. When I arrived there I walked right into the arms of a police officer who was coming out, and only managed to disarm his suspicions by pretending to be hopelessly drunk.

"That was how Enoch Drebber came to his end. All I had to do then was to do as much for Stangerson, and so pay off John Ferrier's debt. I knew that he was staying at Halliday's Private Hotel, and I hung about all day, but he never came out. I fancy that he suspected something when Drebber failed to put in an appearance. He was cunning, was Stangerson, and always on his guard. If he thought he could keep me off by staying in-doors he was very much mistaken. I soon found out which was the window of his bedroom, and early next morning I took advantage of some ladders which were lying in the lane behind the hotel, and so made my way into his room in the gray of the dawn. I woke him up, and told him that the hour had come when he was to answer for the life he had taken so long before. I described Drebber's

death to him, and I gave him the same choice of the poisoned pills. Instead of grasping at the chance of safety which that offered him, he sprang from his bed and flew at my throat. In self-defence I stabbed him to the heart. It would have been the same in any case, for Providence would never have allowed his guilty hand to pick out anything but the poison.

"I have little more to say, and it's as well, for I am about done up. I went on cabbing it for a day or so, intending to keep at it until I could save enough to take me back to America. I was standing in the yard when a ragged youngster asked if there was a cabby there called Jefferson Hope, and said that his cab was wanted by a gentleman at 221B Baker Street. I went round, suspecting no harm, and the next thing I knew this young man here had the bracelets on my wrists, and as neatly shackled as ever I was in my life. That's the whole of my story, gentlemen. You may consider me to be a murderer, but I hold that I am just as much an officer of justice as you are."

So thrilling had the man's narrative been, and his manner was so impressive, that we had sat silent and absorbed. Even the professional detectives, *blase* as they were in every detail of crime, appeared to be keenly interested in the man's story. When he finished we sat for some minutes in a stillness which was only broken by the scratching of Lestrade's pencil as he gave the finishing touches to his short-hand account.

"There is only one point on which I should like a lit-

tle more information," Sherlock Holmes said at last. "Who was your accomplice who came for the ring which I advertised?"

The prisoner winked at my friend jocosely.

"I can tell my own secrets," he said, "but I don't get other people into trouble. I saw your advertisement, and I thought it might be a plant, or it might be the ring I wanted. My friend volunteered to go and see. I think you'll own he did it smartly."

"Not a doubt of that," said Holmes, heartily.

"Now, gentlemen," the inspector remarked, gravely, "the forms of the law must be complied with. On Thursday the prisoner will be brought before the magistrates, and your attendance will be required. Until then I will be responsible for him."

He rang the bell as he spoke, and Jefferson Hope was led off by a couple of warders, while my friend and I made our way out of the station and took a cab back to Baker Street.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONCLUSION.

We had all been warned to appear before the magistrates upon the Thursday; but when the Thursday came there was no occasion for our testimony. A higher Judge had taken the matter in hand, and Jefferson Hope had been summoned before a tribunal where strict justice would be meted out to him. On the very night after his capture the aneurism burst, and he was found in the morning stretched upon the floor of his cell, with a placid smile upon his face, as though he had been able in his dying moments to look back upon a useful life and on work well done.

"Gregson and Lestrade will be wild about his death," Holmes remarked, as we chatted over it next evening. "Where will their grand advertisement be now?"

"I don't see that they had very much to do with his capture," I answered.

"What you do in this world is a matter of no consequence," returned my companion, bitterly. "The question is, what can you make people believe that

you have done. "Never mind," he continued, more brightly, after a pause, "I would not have missed the investigation for anything. There has been no better case within my recollection. Simple as it was, there were several most instructive points about it."

"Simple!" I ejaculated.

"Well, really, it can hardly be described as otherwise," said Sherlock Holmes, smiling at my surprise. "The proof of its intrinsic simplicity is that without any help, save a few very ordinary deductions, I was able to lay my hand upon the criminal within three days."

"That is true," said I.

"I have already explained to you that what is out of the common is usually a guide rather than a hindrance. In solving a problem of this sort, the grand thing is to be able to reason backward. That is a very useful accomplishment and a very easy one, but people do not practise it much. In the every-day affairs of life it is more useful to reason forward, and so the other comes to be neglected. There are fifty who can reason synthetically for one who can reason analytically."

"I confess," said I, "that I do not quite follow you."

"I hardly expected that you would. Let me see if I can make it clear. Most people, if you describe a train of events to them, will tell you what the result would be. They can put those events together in their minds, and argue from them that something will come

to pass. There are few people, however, who, if you told them a result, would be able to evolve from their own inner consciousness what the steps were which led up to that result. This power is what I mean when I talk of reasoning backward, or analytically."

"I understand," said I.

"Now, this was a case in which you were given the result, and had to find everything else for yourself. Now, let me endeavor to show you the different steps in my reasoning. To begin at the beginning. I approached the house, as you know, on foot, and with my mind entirely free from all impressions. I naturally began by examining the roadway, and there, as I have already explained to you, I saw clearly the marks of a cab, which, I ascertained by inquiry, must have been there during the night. I satisfied myself that it was a cab, and not a private carriage, by the narrow gauge of the wheels. The ordinary London growler is considerably less wide than a gentleman's brougham.

"This was the first point gained. I then walked slowly down the garden path, which happened to be composed of a clay soil, peculiarly suitable for taking impressions. No doubt it appeared to you to be a mere trampled line of slush, but to my trained eyes every mark upon its surface had a meaning. There is no branch of detective science which is so important and so much neglected as the art of tracing footsteps. Happily, I have always laid great stress upon it, and much practice has made it second nature to me. I

saw the heavy foot-marks of the constables, but I saw also the tracks of the two men who had first passed through the garden. It was easy to tell that they had been before the others, because in places their marks had been entirely obliterated by the others coming upon the top of them. In this way my second link was formed, which told me that the nocturnal visitors were two in number, one remarkable for his height (as I calculated from the length of his stride), and the other fashionably dressed, to judge from the small and elegant impression left by his boots.

"On entering the house this last inference was confirmed. My well-booted man lay before me. The tall one, then, had done the murder, if murder there was. There was no wound upon the dead man's person, but the agitated expression upon his face assured me that he had foreseen his fate before it came upon him. Men who die from heart disease or any sudden natural cause never by any chance exhibit agitation upon their features. Having sniffed the dead man's lips, I detected a slightly sour smell, and I came to the conclusion that he had had poison forced upon him. Again, I argued that it had been forced upon him from the hatred and fear expressed upon his face. By the method of exclusion I had arrived at this result, for no other hypothesis would meet the facts. Do not imagine that it was a very unheard-of idea. The forcible administration of poison is by no means a new thing in criminal annals. The cases of Dolsky, in

Odessa, and of Leturier, in Montpellier, will occur at once to any toxicologist.

"And now came the great question as to the reason why. Robbery had not been the object of the murder, for nothing was taken. Was it politics, then, or was it a woman? That was the question which confronted me. I was inclined from the first to the latter supposition. Political assassins are only too glad to do their work and to fly. This murder had, on the contrary, been done most deliberately, and the perpetrator had left his tracks all over the room, showing that he had been there all the time. It must have been a private wrong, and not a political one, which called for such a methodical revenge. When the inscription was discovered upon the wall I was more inclined than ever to my opinion. The thing was too evidently a blind. When the ring was found, however, it settled the question. Clearly the murderer had used it to remind his victim of some dead or absent woman. It was at this point that I asked Gregson whether he had inquired in his telegram to Cleveland as to any particular point in Mr. Drebber's former career. He answered, you remember, in the negative.

"I then proceeded to make a careful examination of the room, which confirmed me in my opinion as to the murderer's height, and furnished me with the additional detail as to the Trichinopoly cigar and the length of his nails. I had already come to the con-

clusion, since there were no signs of a struggle, that the blood which covered the floor had burst from the murderer's nose in his excitement. I could perceive that the track of blood coincided with the track of his feet. It is seldom that any man, unless he is very full-blooded, breaks out in this way through emotion, so I hazarded the opinion that the criminal was probably a robust and ruddy-faced man. Events proved that I had judged correctly.

"Having left the house, I proceeded to do what Gregson had neglected. I telegraphed to the head of the police at Cleveland, limiting my inquiry to the circumstances connected with the marriage of Enoch Drebber. The answer was conclusive. It told me that Drebber had already applied for the protection of the law against an old rival in love, named Jefferson Hope, and that this same Hope was at present in Europe. I knew now that I held the clue to the mystery in my hand, and all that remained was to secure the murderer.

"I had already determined in my own mind that the man who had walked into the house with Drebber was none other than the man who had driven the cab. The marks in the road showed me that the horse had wandered on in a way which would have been impossible had there been any one in charge of it. Where, then, could the driver be, unless he were inside the house? Again, it is absurd to suppose that any sane man would carry out a deliberate crime under the very eyes, as it

were, of a third person, who was sure to betray him. Lastly, supposing one man wished to dog another through London, what better means could he adopt than to turn cab driver? All these considerations led me to the irresistible conclusion that Jefferson Hope was to be found among the jarveys of the metropolis.

"If he had been one there was no reason to believe that he had ceased to be. On the contrary, from his point of view, any sudden change would be likely to draw attention to himself. He would probably, for a time at least, continue to perform his duties. There was no reason to suppose that he was going under an assumed name. Why should he change his name in a country where no one knew his original one? I therefore organized my street-arab detective corps, and sent them systematically to every cab proprietor in London until they ferreted out the man that I wanted. How well they succeeded, and how quickly I took advantage of it, are still fresh in your recollection. The murder of Stangerson was an incident which was entirely unexpected, but which could hardly in any case have been prevented. Through it, as you know, I came into possession of the pills, the existence of which I had already surmised. You see, the whole thing is a chain of logical sequences without a break or flaw."

"It is wonderful!" I cried. "Your merits should be publicly recognized. You should publish an account of the case. If you won't, I will for you."

"You may do what you like, doctor," he answered. "See here!" he continued, handing a paper over to me; "look at this!"

It was the "Echo" for the day, and the paragraph to which he pointed was devoted to the case in question.

"The public," it said, "have lost a sensational treat through the sudden death of the man Hope, who was suspected of the murder of Mr. Enoch Drebber and of Mr. Joseph Stangerson. The details of the case will probably never be known now, though we are informed upon good authority that the crime was the result of an old-standing and romantic feud, in which love and Mormonism bore a part. It seems that both the victims belonged, in their younger days, to the Latter-Day Saints, and Hope, the deceased prisoner, hails also from Salt Lake City. If the case has had no other effect, it at least brings out in the most striking manner the efficiency of our detective police force, and will serve as a lesson to all foreigners that they will do wisely to settle their feuds at home, and not to carry them on to British soil. It is an open secret that the credit of this smart capture belongs entirely to the well-known Scotland Yard officials, Messrs. Lestrade and Gregson. The man was apprehended, it appears, in the rooms of a certain Mr. Sherlock Holmes, who has himself, as an amateur, shown some talent in the detective line, and who, with such instructors, may hope in time to attain to some degree of their skill. It is expected that a testimonial of some sort will be

presented to the two officers as a fitting recognition of their services."

"Didn't I tell you so when we started?" cried Sherlock Holmes, with a laugh. "That's the result of all our Study in Scarlet—to get them a testimonial."

"Never mind," I answered; "I have all the facts in my journal, and the public shall know them. In the meantime you must make yourself contented by the consciousness of success, like the Roman miser—

> "'Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo
> Ipse domi simul ac nummos contemplar in arca.'"

A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA.

I.

To Sherlock Holmes she is always *the* woman. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex. It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind. He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen; but as a lover, he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer. They were admirable things for the observer—excellent for drawing the veil from men's motives and actions. But for the trained reasoner to admit such intrusions into his own delicate and finely adjusted temperament was to introduce a distracting factor which might throw a doubt upon all his mental results. Grit in a sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-power lenses, would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a

nature such as his. And yet there was but one woman to him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler, of dubious and questionable memory.

I had seen little of Holmes lately. My marriage had drifted us away from each other. My own complete happiness, and the home-centered interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to absorb all my attention; while Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker Street, buried among his old books, and alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug, and the fierce energy of his own keen nature. He was still, as ever, deeply attracted by the study of crime, and occupied his immense faculties and extraordinary powers of observation in following out those clews, and clearing up those mysteries, which had been abandoned as hopeless by the official police. From time to time I heard some vague account of his doings; of his summons to Odessa in the case of the Trepoff murder, of his clearing up of the singular tragedy of the Atkinson brothers at Trincomalee, and finally of the mission which he had accomplished so delicately and successfully for the reigning family of Holland. Beyond these signs of his activity, however, which I merely shared with all the readers of the daily press, I knew little of my former friend and companion.

One night—it was on the 20th of March, 1888—I was returning from a journey to a patient (for

I had now returned to civil practise), when my way led me through Baker Street. As I passed the well-remembered door, which must always be associated in my mind with my wooing, and with the dark incidents of the Study in Scarlet, I was seized with a keen desire to see Holmes again, and to know how he was employing his extraordinary powers. His rooms were brilliantly lighted, and even as I looked up, I saw his tall spare figure pass twice in a dark silhouette against the blind. He was pacing the room swiftly, eagerly, with his head sunk upon his chest, and his hands clasped behind him. To me, who knew his every mood and habit, his attitude and manner told their own story. He was at work again. He had risen out of his drug-created dreams, and was hot upon the scent of some new problem. I rang the bell, and was shown up to the chamber which had formerly been in part my own.

His manner was not effusive. It seldom was; but he was glad, I think, to see me. With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to an armchair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a gasogene in the corner. Then he stood before the fire, and looked me over in his singular introspective fashion.

"Wedlock suits you," he remarked. "I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you."

"Seven," I answered.

"Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy, Watson. And in prac-

tise again, I observe. You did not tell me that you intended to go into harness."

"Then how do you know?"

"I see it, I deduce it. How do I know that you have been getting yourself very wet lately, and that you have a most clumsy and careless servant-girl?"

"My dear Holmes," said I, "this is too much. You would certainly have been burned had you lived a few centuries ago. It is true that I had a country walk on Thursday and came home in a dreadful mess; but as I have changed my clothes, I can't imagine how you deduce it. As to Mary Jane, she is incorrigible, and my wife has given her notice; but there again I fail to see how you work it out."

He chuckled to himself and rubbed his long, nervous hands together.

"It is simplicity itself," said he; "my eyes tell me that on the inside of your left shoe, just where the fire-light strikes it, the leather is scored by six almost parallel cuts. Obviously they have been caused by some one who has very carelessly scraped round the edges of the sole in order to remove crusted mud from it. Hence, you see, my double deduction that you had been out in vile weather, and that you had a particularly malignant boot-slicking specimen of the London slavey. As to your practise, if a gentleman walks into my rooms, smelling of iodoform, with a black mark of nitrate of silver upon his right forefinger, and a bulge on the side of his top-hat to show where he has secreted his stethoscope, I must be dull indeed if I do not pronounce

him to be an active member of the medical profession."

I could not help laughing at the ease with which he explained his process of deduction. "When I hear you give your reasons," I remarked, "the thing always appears to me so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive instance of your reasoning I am baffled, until you explain your process. And yet, I believe that my eyes are as good as yours."

"Quite so," he answered, lighting a cigarette, and throwing himself down into an armchair. "You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear. For example, you have frequently seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room."

"Frequently."

"How often?"

"Well, some hundreds of times."

"Then how many are there?"

"How many? I don't know."

"Quite so! You have not observed. And yet you have seen. That is just my point. Now, I know there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed. By the way, since you are interested in these little problems, and since you are good enough to chronicle one or two of my trifling experiences, you may be interested in this." He threw over a sheet of thick pink-tinted note-paper which had been lying open upon the table. "It came by the last post," said he. "Read it aloud."

The note was undated, and without either signature or address.

"There will call upon you to-night, at a quarter to eight o'clock," it said, "a gentleman who desires to consult you upon a matter of the very deepest moment. Your recent services to one of the royal houses of Europe have shown that you are one who may safely be trusted with matters which are of an importance which can hardly be exaggerated. This account of you we have from all quarters received. Be in your chamber, then, at that hour, and do not take it amiss if your visitor wears a mask."

"This is indeed a mystery," I remarked. "What do you imagine that it means?"

"I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts. But the note itself—what do you deduce from it?"

I carefully examined the writing, and the paper upon which it was written.

"The man who wrote it was presumably well to do," I remarked, endeavoring to imitate my companion's processes. "Such paper could not be bought under half a crown a packet. It is peculiarly strong and stiff."

"Peculiar—that is the very word," said Holmes. "It is not an English paper at all. Hold it up to the light."

I did so, and saw a large *E* with a small *g*, a *P* and a large *G* with a small *t* woven into the texture of the paper.

"What do you make of that?" asked Holmes.

"The name of the maker, no doubt; or his monogram, rather."

"Not at all. The *G* with the small *t* stands for 'Gesellschaft,' which is the German for 'Company.' It is a customary contraction like our 'Co.' *P*, of course, stands for 'Papier.' Now for the *Eg*. Let us glance at our 'Continental Gazetteer.'" He took down a heavy brown volume from his shelves. "Eglow, Eglonitz—here we are, Egria. It is in a German-speaking country—in Bohemia, not far from Carlsbad. 'Remarkable as being the scene of the death of Wallenstein, and for its numerous glass factories and paper mills.' Ha! ha! my boy, what do you make of that?" His eyes sparkled, and he sent up a great blue triumphant cloud from his cigarette.

"The paper was make in Bohemia," I said.

"Precisely. And the man who wrote the note is a German. Do you note the peculiar construction of the sentence—'This account of you we have from all quarters received?' A Frenchman or Russian could not have written that. It is the German who is so uncourteous to his verbs. It only remains, therefore, to discover what is wanted by this German who writes upon Bohemian paper, and prefers wearing a mask to showing his face. And here he comes, if I am not mistaken, to resolve all our doubts."

As he spoke there was the sharp sound of horses' hoofs and grating wheels against the curb followed by a sharp pull at the bell. Holmes whistled.

"A pair, by the sound," said he. "Yes," he con-

tinued, glancing out of the window. "A nice little brougham and a pair of beauties. A hundred and fifty guineas apiece. There's money in this case, Watson, if there is nothing else."

"I think I had better go, Holmes."

"Not a bit, doctor. Stay where you are. I am lost without my Boswell. And this promises to be interesting. It would be a pity to miss it."

"But your client—"

"Never mind him. I may want your help, and so may he. Here he comes. Sit down in that arm-chair, doctor, and give us your best attention."

A slow and heavy step, which had been heard upon the stairs and in the passage, paused immediately outside the door. Then there was a loud and authoritative tap.

"Come in!" said Holmes.

A man entered who could hardly have been less than six feet six inches in height, with the chest and limbs of a Hercules. His dress was rich with a richness which would, in England, be looked upon as akin to bad taste. Heavy bands of astrakhan were slashed across the sleeves and front of his double-breasted coat, while the deep blue cloak which was thrown over his shoulders was lined with flame-colored silk, and secured at the neck with a brooch which consisted of a single flaming beryl. Boots which extended half-way up his calves, and which were trimmed at the tops with rich brown fur, completed the impression of barbaric opulence which was suggested by his whole appearance. He carried a broad-brimmed hat in his hand, while he wore

across the upper part of his face, extending down past the cheek-bones, a black visard-mask, which he had apparently adjusted that very moment, for his hand was still raised to it as he entered. From the lower part of the face he appeared to be a man of strong character, with a thick, hanging lip, and a long, straight chin, suggestive of resolution pushed to the length of obstinacy.

"You had may note?" he asked, with a deep, harsh voice and a strongly marked German accent. "I told you that I would call." He looked from one to the other of us, as if uncertain which to address.

"Pray take a seat," said Holmes. "This is my friend and colleague, Doctor Watson, who is occasionally good enough to help me in my cases. Whom have I the honor to address?"

"You may address me as the Count von Kramm, a Bohemian nobleman. I understand that this gentleman, your friend, is a man of honor and discretion, whom I may trust with a matter of the most extreme importance. If not, I should much prefer to communicate with you alone."

I rose to go, but Holmes caught me by the wrist and pushed me back into my chair. "It is both, or none," said he. "You may say before this gentleman anything which you may say to me."

The count shrugged his broad shoulders. "Then I must begin," said he, "by binding you both to absolute secrecy for two years, at the end of that time the matter will be of no importance. At present it is not too much to say that it is of such weight

that it may have an influence upon European history."

"I promise," said Holmes.

"And I."

"You will excuse this mask," continued our strange visitor. "The august person who employs me wishes his agent to be unknown to you, and I may confess at once that the title by which I have just called myself is not exactly my own."

"I was aware of it," said Holmes, dryly.

"The circumstances are of great delicacy, and every precaution has to be taken to quench what might grow to be an immense scandal, and seriously compromise one of the reigning families of Europe. To speak plainly, the matter implicates the great House of Ormstein, hereditary kings of Bohemia."

"I was also aware of that," murmured Holmes, settling himself down in his armchair, and closing his eyes.

Our visitor glanced with some apparent surprise at the languid, lounging figure of the man who had been, no doubt, depicted to him as the most incisive reasoner and most energetic agent in Europe. Holmes slowly reopened his eyes and looked impatiently at his gigantic client.

"If your majesty would condescend to state your case," he remarked, "I should be better able to advise you."

The man sprung from his chair, and paced up and down the room in uncontrollable agitation. Then, with a gesture of desperation, he tore the mask from his face and hurled it upon the ground.

"You are right," he cried, "I am the king. Why should I attempt to conceal it?"

"Why, indeed?" murmured Holmes. "Your majesty had not spoken before I was aware that I was addressing Wilhelm Gottsreich Sigismond von Ormstein, Grand Duke of Cassel-Felstein, and hereditary King of Bohemia."

"But you can understand," said our strange visitor, sitting down once more and passing his hand over his high, white forehead, "you can understand that I am not accustomed to doing such business in my own person. Yet the matter was so delicate that I could not confide it to an agent without putting myself in his power. I have come incognito from Prague for the purpose of consulting you."

"Then, pray consult," said Holmes, shutting his eyes once more.

"The facts are briefly these: Some five years ago, during a lengthy visit to Warsaw, I made the acquaintance of the well-known adventuress Irene Adler. The name is no doubt familiar to you."

"Kindly look her up in my index, doctor," murmured Holmes, without opening his eyes. For many years he had adopted a system for docketing all paragraphs concerning men and things, so that it was difficult to name a subject or a person on which he could not at once furnish information. In this case I found her biography sandwiched in between that of a Hebrew rabbi and that of a staff-commander who had written a monogram upon the deep-sea fishes.

"Let me see!" said Holmes. "Hum! Born in New Jersey in the year 1858. Contralto—hum! La Scala—hum! Prima-donna Imperial Opera of Warsaw—yes! Retired from operatic stage—ha! Living in London—quite so! Your majesty, as I understand, became entangled with this young person, wrote her some compromising letters, and is now desirous of getting those letters back."

"Precisely so. But how—"

"Was there a secret marriage?"

"None."

"No legal papers or certificates?"

"None."

"Then I fail to follow your majesty. If this young person should produce her letters for blackmailing or other purposes, how is she to prove their authenticity?"

"There is the writing."

"Pooh, pooh! Forgery."

"My private note-paper."

"Stolen."

"My own seal."

"Imitated."

"My photograph."

"Bought."

"We were both in the photograph."

"Oh, dear! That is very bad. Your majesty has indeed committed an indiscretion."

"I was mad—insane."

"You have compromised yourself seriously."

"I was only crown prince then. I was young. I am but thirty now."

"It must be recovered."

"We have tried and failed."

"Your majesty must pay. It must be bought."

"She will not sell."

"Stolen, then."

"Five attempts have been made. Twice burglars in my pay ransacked her house. Once we diverted her luggage when she traveled. Twice she has been waylaid. There has been no result."

"No sign of it?"

"Absolutely none."

Holmes laughed. "It is quite a pretty little problem," said he.

"But a very serious one to me," returned the king, reproachfully.

"Very, indeed. And what does she propose to do with the photograph?"

"To ruin me."

"But how?"

"I am about to be married."

"So I have heard."

"To Clotilde Lothman von Saxe-Meiningen, second daughter of the King of Scandinavia. You may know the strict principles of her family. She is herself the very soul of delicacy. A shadow of a doubt as to my conduct would bring the matter to an end."

"And Irene Adler?"

"Threatens to send them the photograph. And she will do it. I know that she will do it. You do not know her, but she has a soul of steel. She has the face of the most beautiful of women and the

mind of the most resolute of men. Rather than I should marry another woman, there are no lengths to which she would not go—none."

"You are sure that she has not sent it yet?"

"I am sure."

"And why?"

"Because she has said that she would send it on the day when the betrothal was publicly proclaimed. That will be next Monday."

"Oh, then we have three days yet," said Holmes, with a yawn. "That is very fortunate, as I have one or two matters of importance to look into just at present. Your majesty will, of course, stay in London for the present?"

"Certainly. You will find me at the Langham, under the name of the Count von Kramm."

"Then I shall drop you a line to let you know how we progress."

"Pray do so; I shall be all anxiety."

"Then, as to money?"

"You have *carte blanche*."

"Absolutely?"

"I tell you that I would give one of the provinces of my kingdom to have that photograph."

"And for present expenses?"

The king took a heavy chamois leather bag from under his cloak, and laid it on the table.

"There are three hundred pounds in gold, and seven hundred in notes," he said.

Holmes scribbled a receipt upon a sheet of his note-book, and handed it to him.

"And mademoiselle's address?" he asked.

"Is Briony Lodge, Serpentine Avenue, St. John's Wood."

Holmes took a note of it. "One other question," said he, thoughtfully. "Was the photograph a cabinet?"

"It was."

"Then, good night, your majesty, and I trust that we shall soon have some good news for you. And good night, Watson," he added, as the wheels of the royal brougham rolled down the street. "If you will be good enough to call to-morrow afternoon, at three o'clock, I should like to chat this little matter over with you."

II.

At three o'clock precisely I was at Baker Street, but Holmes had not yet returned. The landlady informed me that he had left the house shortly after eight o'clock in the morning. I sat down beside the fire, however, with the intention of awaiting him, however long he might be. I was already deeply interested in his inquiry, for, though it was surrounded by none of the grim and strange features which were associated with the two crimes which I have already recorded, still, the nature of the case and the exalted station of his client gave it a character of its own. Indeed, apart from the nature of the investigation which my friend had on hand, there was something in his masterly grasp of a situation, and his keen, incisive reasoning, which made it a pleasure to me to study his system of work, and to follow the quick, subtle methods by which he disentangled the most inextricable mysteries. So accustomed was I to his invariable success that the very possibility of his failing had ceased to enter into my head.

It was close upon four before the door opened, and a drunken-looking groom, ill-kempt and side-whiskered, with an inflamed face and disreputable clothes, walked into the room. Accustomed as I was to my friend's amazing powers in the use of disguises, I had to look three times before I was certain that it was

indeed he. With a nod he vanished into the bedroom, whence he emerged in five minutes tweed-suited and respectable, as of old. Putting his hand into his pockets, he stretched out his legs in front of the fire, and laughed heartily for some minutes.

"Well, really!" he cried, and then he choked, and laughed again until he was obliged to lie back, limp and helpless, in the chair.

"What is it?"

"It's quite too funny. I am sure you could never guess how I employed my morning, or what I ended by doing."

"I can't imagine. I suppose that you have been watching the habits, and, perhaps, the house of Miss Irene Adler."

"Quite so, but the sequel was rather unusual. I will tell you, however. I left the house a little after eight o'clock this morning in the character of a groom out of work. There is a wonderful sympathy and freemasonry among horsy men. Be one of them, and you will know all that there is to know. I soon found Briony Lodge. It is a bijou villa, with a garden at the back, but built out in front right up to the road, two stories. Chubb lock to the door. Large sitting-room on the right side, well furnished, with long windows almost to the floor, and those preposterous English window-fasteners which a child could open. Behind there was nothing remarkable, save that the passage window could be reached from the top of the coach-house. I walked round it and examined it closely from every point of view, but without noting anything else of interest.

"I then lounged down the street, and found, as I expected, that there was a mews in a lane which runs down by one wall of the garden. I lent the hostlers a hand in rubbing down their horses, and I received in exchange twopence, a glass of half-and-half, two fills of shag tobacco, and as much information as I could desire about Miss Adler, to say nothing of half a dozen other people in the neighborhood, in whom I was not in the least interested, but whose biographies I was compelled to listen to."

"And what of Irene Adler?" I asked.

"Oh, she has turned all the men's heads down in that part. She is the daintiest thing under a bonnet on this planet. So say the Serpentine Mews, to a man. She lives quietly, sings at concerts, drives out at five every day, and returns at seven sharp for dinner. Seldom goes out at other times, except when she sings. Has only one male visitor, but a good deal of him. He is dark, handsome, and dashing; never calls less than once a day, and often twice. He is a Mr. Godfrey Norton of the Inner Temple. See the advantages of a cabman as a confidant. They had driven him home a dozen times from Serpentine Mews, and knew all about him. When I had listened to all that they had to tell, I began to walk up and down near Briony Lodge once more, and to think over my plan of campaign.

"This Godfrey Norton was evidently an important factor in the matter. He was a lawyer. That sounded ominous. What was the relation between them, and what the object of his repeated visits? Was she his client, his friend, or his mistress? If

the former, she had probably transferred the photograph to his keeping. If the latter, it was less likely On the issue of this question depended whether I should continue my work at Briony Lodge, or turn my attention to the gentleman's chambers in the Temple. It was a delicate point, and it widened the field of my inquiry. I fear that I bore you with these details, but I have to let you see my little difficulties, if you are to understand the situation."

"I am following you closely," I answered.

"I was still balancing the matter in my mind, when a hansom cab drove up to Briony Lodge, and a gentleman sprung out. He was a remarkably handsome man, dark, aquiline, and mustached—evidently the man of whom I had heard. He appeared to be in a great hurry, shouted to the cabman to wait, and brushed past the maid who opened the door, with the air of a man who was thoroughly at home.

"He was in the house about half an hour, and I could catch glimpses of him in the windows of the sitting-room, pacing up and down, talking excitedly and waving his arms. Of her I could see nothing. Presently he emerged, looking even more flurried than before. As he stepped up to the cab, he pulled a gold watch from his pocket and looked at it earnestly. 'Drive like the devil!' he shouted, 'first to Gross & Hankey's in Regent Street, and then to the Church of St. Monica in the Edgeware Road. Half a guinea if you do it in twenty minutes!'

"Away they went, and I was just wondering whether I should not do well to follow them, when

up the lane came a neat little landau, the coachman with his coat only half buttoned, and his tie under his ear, while all the tags of his harness were sticking out of the buckles. It hadn't pulled up before she shot out of the hall door and into it. I only caught a glimpse of her at the moment, but she was a lovely woman, with a face that a man might die for.

"'The Church of St. Monica, John,' she cried; 'and half a sovereign if you reach it in twenty minutes.'

"This was quite too good to lose, Watson. I was just balancing whether I should run for it, or whether I should perch behind her landau, when a cab came through the street. The driver looked twice at such a shabby fare; but I jumped in before he could object. 'The Church of St. Monica,' said I, 'and half a sovereign if you reach it in twenty minutes.' It was twenty-five minutes to twelve, and of course it was clear enough what was in the wind.

"My cabby drove fast. I don't think I ever drove faster, but the others were there before us. The cab and landau with their steaming horses were in front of the door when I arrived. I paid the man, and hurried into the church. There was not a soul there save the two whom I had followed, and a surpliced clergyman, who seemed to be expostulating with them. They were all three standing in a knot in front of the altar. I lounged up the side aisle like any other idler who has dropped into a church, Suddenly, to my surprise, the three

at the altar faced round to me, and Godfrey Norton came running as hard as he could toward me.

"'Thank God!' he cried. 'You'll do. Come! Come!'

"'What then?' I asked.

"'Come, man, come; only three minutes, or it won't be legal.'

"I was half dragged up to the altar, and, before I knew were I was, I found myself mumbling responses which were whispered in my ear, and vouching for things of which I knew nothing, and generally assisting in the secure tying up of Irene Adler, spinster, to Godfrey Norton, bachelor. It was all done in an instant, and there was the gentleman thanking me on the one side and the lady on the other, while the clergyman beamed on me in front. It was the most preposterous position in which I ever found myself in my life, and it was the thought of it that started me laughing just now. It seems that there had been some informality about their license; that the clergyman absolutely refused to marry them without a witness of some sort, and that my lucky appearance saved the bridegroom from having to sally out into the streets in search of a best man. The bride gave me a sovereign, and I mean to wear it on my watch-chain in memory of the occasion."

"This is a very unexpected turn of affairs," said I; "and what then?"

"Well, I found my plans very seriously menaced. It looked as if the pair might take an immediate departure, and so necessitate very prompt and ener-

getic measures on my part. At the church door, however, they separated, he driving back to the Temple, and she to her own house. 'I shall drive out in the park at five as usual,' she said, as she left him. I heard no more. They drove away in different directions, and I went off to make my own arrangements."

"Which are?"

"Some cold beef and a glass of beer," he answered, ringing the bell. "I have been too busy to think of food, and I am likely to be busier still this evening. By the way, doctor, I shall want your co-operation."

"I shall be delighted."

"You don't mind breaking the law?"

"Not in the least."

"Nor running a chance of arrest?"

"Not in a good cause."

"Oh, the cause is excellent!"

"Then I am your man."

"I was sure that I might rely on you."

"But what is it you wish?"

"When Mrs. Turner has brought in the tray I will make it clear to you. Now," he said, as he turned hungrily on the simple fare that our landlady had provided, "I must discuss it while I eat, for I have not much time. It is nearly five now. In two hours we must be on the scene of action. Miss Irene, or Madame, rather, returns from her drive at seven. We must be at Briony Lodge to meet her."

"And what then?"

"You must leave that to me. I have already arranged what is to occur. There is only one point on which I must insist. You must not interfere, come what may. You understand?"

"I am to be neutral?"

"To do nothing whatever. There will probably be some small unpleasantness. Do not join in it. It will end in my being conveyed into the house. Four or five minutes afterward the sitting-room window will open. You are to station yourself close to that open window."

"Yes."

"You are to watch me, for I will be visible to you."

"Yes."

"And when I raise my hand—so—you will throw into the room what I give you to throw, and will, at the same time, raise the cry of fire. You quite follow me?"

"Entirely."

"It is nothing very formidable," he said, taking a long, cigar-shaped roll from his pocket. "It is an ordinary plumber's smoke-rocket, fitted with a cap at either end, to make it self-lighting. Your task is confined to that. When you rise your cry of fire, it will be taken up by quite a number of people. You may then walk to the end of the street, and I will rejoin you in ten minutes. I hope that I have made myself clear?"

"I am to remain neutral, to get near the window, to watch you, and, at the signal, to throw in this object, then to raise the cry of fire, and to wait you at the corner of the street."

"Precisely."

"Then you may entirely rely on me."

"That is excellent. I think, perhaps, it is almost time that I prepared for the new rôle I have to play."

He disappeared into his bedroom, and returned in a few minutes in the character of an amiable and simple-minded Nonconformist clergyman. His broad, black hat, his baggy trousers, his white tie, his sympathetic smile, and general look of peering and benevolent curiosity were such as Mr. John Hare alone could have equaled. It was not merely that Holmes changed his costume. His expression, his manner, his very soul seemed to vary with every fresh part that he assumed. The stage lost a fine actor, even as science lost an acute reasoner, when he became a specialist in crime.

It was a quarter past six when we left Baker Street, and it still wanted ten minutes to the hour when we found ourselves in Serpentine Avenue. It was already dusk, and the lamps were just being lighted as we paced up and down in front of Briony Lodge, waiting for the coming of its occupant. The house was just such as I had pictured it from Sherlock Holmes' succinct description, but the locality appeared to be less private than I expected. On the contrary, for a small street in a quiet neighborhood, it was remarkably animated. There was a group of shabbily dressed men smocking and laughing in a corner, a scissors-grinder with his wheel, two guardsmen who were flirting with a nurse-girl, and several well-dressed young men who were lounging up and down with cigars in their mouths.

"You see," remarked Holmes, as we paced to and fro in front of the house, "This marriage rather simplifies matters. The photograph becomes a double-edged weapon now. The chances are that she would be as averse to its being seen by Mr. Godfrey Norton as our client is to its coming to the eyes of his princess. Now the question is—where are we to find the photograph?"

"Where, indeed?"

"It is most unlikely that she carries it about with her. It is cabinet size. Too large for easy concealment about a woman's dress. She knows that the king is capable of having her waylaid and searched. Two attempts of the sort have already been made. We may take it, then, that she does not carry it about with her."

"Where, then?"

"Her banker or her lawyer. There is that double possibility. But I am inclined to think neither. Women are naturally secretive, and they like to do their own secreting. Why should she hand it over to any one else? She could trust her own guardianship, but she could not tell what indirect or political influence might be brought to bear upon a business man. Besides, remember that she had resolved to use it within a few days. It must be where she can lay her hands upon it. It must be in her own house."

"But it has twice been burglarized."

"Pshaw! They did not know how to look."

"But how will you look?"

"I will not look."

"What then?"

"I will get her to show me."

"But she will refuse."

"She will not be able to. But I hear the rumble of wheels. It is her carriage. Now carry out my orders to the letter."

As he spoke, the gleam of the side-lights of a carriage came round the curve of the avenue. It was a smart little landau which rattled up to the door of Briony Lodge. As it pulled up one of the loafing men at the corner dashed forward to open the door in the hope of earning a copper, but was elbowed away by another loafer who had rushed up with the same intention. A fierce quarrel broke out which was increased by the two guardsmen, who took sides with one of the loungers, and by the scissors-grinder, who was equally hot upon the other side. A blow was struck, and in an instant the lady, who had stepped from her carriage, was the center of a little knot of struggling men who struck savagely at each other with their fists and sticks. Holmes dashed into the crowd to protect the lady; but, just as he reached her, he gave a cry and dropped to the ground, with the blood running freely down his face. At his fall the guardsmen took to their heels in one direction and the loungers in the other, while a number of better dressed people who had watched the scuffle without taking part in it crowded in to help the lady and to attend to the injured man. Irene Adler, as I will still call her, had hurried up the steps; but she stood at the top, with her superb figure outlined against

the lights of the hall, looking back into the street.

"Is the poor gentleman much hurt?" she asked.

"He is dead," cried several voices.

"No, no, there's life in him," shouted another. "But he'll be gone before you can get him to the hospital."

"He's a brave fellow," said a woman. "They would have had the lady's purse and watch if it hadn't been for him. They were a gang, and a rough one, too. Ah! he's breathing now."

"He can't lie in the street. May we bring him in, marm?"

"Surely. Bring him into the sitting-room. There is a comfortable sofa. This way, please." Slowly and solemnly he was borne into Briony Lodge, and laid out in the principal room, while I still observed the proceedings from my post by the window. The lamps had been lighted, but the blinds had not been drawn, so that I could see Holmes as he lay upon the couch. I do not know whether he was seized with compunction at that moment for the part he was playing, but I know that I never felt more heartily ashamed of myself in my life when I saw the beautiful creature against whom I was conspiring, or the grace and kindliness with which she waited upon the injured man. And yet it would be the blackest treachery to Holmes to draw back now from the part which he had intrusted to me. I hardened my heart, and took the smoke-rocket from under my ulster. After all, I thought, we are not injuring her. We are but preventing her from injuring another.

Holmes had sat upon the couch, and I saw him motion like a man who is in need of air. A maid rushed across and threw open the window. At the same instance I saw him raise his hand, and at the signal I tossed my rocket into the room with a cry of "Fire!" The word was no sooner out of my mouth than the whole crowd of spectators, well dressed and ill—gentlemen hostlers, and servant-maids—joined in a general shriek of "Fire!" Thick clouds of smoke curled through the room, and out at the open window. I caught a glimpse of rushing figures, and a moment later the voice of Holmes from within assuring them that it was a false alarm. Slipping through the shouting crowd, I made my way to the corner of the street, and in ten minutes was rejoiced to find my friend's arm in mine, and to get away from the scene of uproar. He walked swiftly and in silence for some few minutes, until we had turned down one of the quiet streets which led toward the Edgware Road.

"You did it very nicely, doctor," he remarked. "Nothing could have been better. It is all right."

"You have the photograph?"

"I know where it is."

"And how did you find out?"

"She showed me, as I told you that she would."

"I am still in the dark."

"I do not wish to make a mystery," said he, laughing. "The matter was perfectly simple. You, of course, saw that every one in the street was an accomplice. They were all engaged for the evening."

"I guessed as much."

"Then, when the row broke out, I had a little moist red paint in the palm of my hand. I rushed forward, fell down, clapped my hand to my face, and became a piteous spectacle. It is an old trick."

"That also I could fathom."

"Then they carried me in. She was bound to have me in. What else could she do? And into her sitting-room, which was the very room which I suspected. It lay between that and her bedroom, and I was determined to see which. They laid me on a couch, I motioned for air, they were compelled to open the window, and you had your chance."

"How did that help you?"

"It was all-important. When a woman thinks that her house is on fire, her instinct is at once to rush to the thing which she values most. It is a perfectly overpowering impulse, and I have more than once taken advantage of it. In the case of the Darlington Substitution Scandal it was of use to me, and also in the Arnsworth Castle business. A married woman grabs at her baby—an unmarried one reaches for her jewel-box. Now it was clear to me that our lady of to-day had nothing in the house more precious to her than what we are in quest of. She would rush to secure it. The alarm of fire was admirably done. The smoke and shouting were enough to shake nerves of steel. She responded beautifully. The photograph is in a recess behind a sliding panel just above the right bell-pull. She was there in an instant, and I caught a glimpse of it as she half drew it out. When I cried out that

it was a false alarm, she replaced it, glanced at the rocket, rushed from the room, and I have not seen her since. I rose, and, making my excuses, escaped from the house. I hesitated whether to attempt to secure the photograph at once; but the coachman had come in, and as he was watching me narrowly, it seemed safer to wait. A little over-precipitance may ruin all."

"And now?" I asked.

"Our quest is practically finished. I shall call with the king to-morrow, and with you, if you care to come with us. We will be shown into the sitting-room to wait for the lady, but it is probable that when she comes she may find neither us nor the photograph. It might be a satisfaction to his majesty to regain it with his own hands."

"And when will you call?"

"At eight in the morning. She will not be up, so that we shall have a clear field. Besides, we must be prompt, for this marriage may mean a complete change in her life and habits. I must wire to the king without delay."

We had reached Baker Street, and had stopped at the door. He was searching his pockets for the key, when some one passing said:

"Good night, Mister Sherlock Holmes."

There were several people on the pavement at the time, but the greeting appeared to come from a slim youth in an ulster who had hurried by.

"I've heard that voice before," said Holmes, staring down the dimly lighted street. "Now, I wonder who the deuce that could have been?"

III.

I SLEPT at Baker Street that night, and we were engaged upon our toast and coffee in the morning, when the King of Bohemia rushed into the room.

"You have really got it?" he cried, grasping Sherlock Holmes by either shoulder, and looking eagerly into his face.

"Not yet."

"But you have hopes?"

"I have hopes."

"Then come. I am all impatience to be gone."

"We must have a cab."

"No, my brougham is waiting."

"Then that will simplify matters." We descended, and started off once more for Briony Lodge.

"Irene Adler is married," remarked Holmes.

"Married! When?"

"Yesterday."

"But to whom?"

"To an English lawyer named Norton."

"But she could not love him."

"I am in hopes that she does."

"And why in hopes?"

"Because it would spare your majesty all fear of future annoyance. If the lady loves her husband, she does not love your majesty. If she does not

love your majesty, there is no reason why she should interfere with your majesty's plan."

"It is true. And yet— Well, I wish she had been of my own station. What a queen she would have made!" He relapsed into a moody silence, which was not broken until we drew up in Serpentine Avenue.

The door of Briony Lodge was open, and an elderly woman stood upon the steps. She watched us with a sardonic eye as we stepped from the brougham.

"Mr. Sherlock Holmes, I believe?" said she.

"I am Mr. Holmes," answered my companion, looking at her with a questioning and rather startled gaze.

"Indeed! My mistress told me that you were likely to call. She left this morning, with her husband, by the 5:15 train from Charing Cross, for the Continent."

"What!" Sherlock Holmes staggered back white with chagrin and surprise.

"Do you mean that she has left England?"

"Never to return."

"And the papers?" asked the king, hoarsely. "All is lost!"

"We shall see." He pushed past the servant, and rushed into the drawing-room, followed by the king and myself. The furniture was scattered about in every direction, with dismantled shelves, and open drawers, as if the lady had hurriedly ransacked them before her flight. Holmes rushed at the bell-pull, tore back a small sliding shutter, and

plunging in his hand, pulled out a photograph and a letter. The photograph was of Irene Adler herself in evening dress; the letter was superscribed to "Sherlock Holmes, Esq. To be left till called for." My friend tore it open, and we all three read it together. It was dated at midnight of the preceding night, and ran in this way:

"My dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes,—You really did it very well. You took me in completely. Until after the alarm of the fire, I had not a suspicion. But then, when I found how I had betrayed myself, I began to think. I had been warned against you months ago. I had been told that if the king employed an agent, it would certainly be you. And your address had been given me. Yet, with all this, you made me reveal what you wanted to know. Even after I became suspicious, I found it hard to think evil of such a dear, kind old clergyman. But, you know, I have been trained as an actress myself. Male costume is nothing new to me. I often take advantage of the freedom which it gives. I sent John, the coachman, to watch you, ran up-stairs, got into my walking clothes, as I call them, and came down just as you departed.

"Well, I followed you to the door, and so made sure that I was really an object of interest to the celebrated Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Then I, rather imprudently, wished you good-night, and started for the Temple to see my husband.

"We both thought the best resource was flight, when pursued by so formidable an antagonist; so

you will find the nest empty when you call to-morrow. As to the photograph, your client may rest in peace. I love and am loved by a better man than he. The king may do what he will without hindrance from one whom he has cruelly wronged. I keep it only to safeguard myself, and preserve a weapon which will always secure me from any steps which he might take in the future. I leave a photograph which he might care to possess; and I remain, dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes, very truly yours,

"IRENE NORTON, *née* ADLER."

"What a woman—oh, what a woman!" cried the King of Bohemia, when we had all three read this epistle. "Did I not tell you how quick and resolute she was? Would she not have made an admirable queen? Is it not a pity that she was not on my level?"

"From what I have seen of the lady, she seems indeed, to be on a very different level to your majesty," said Holmes, coldly. "I am sorry that I have not been able to bring your majesty's business to a more successful conclusion."

"On the contrary, my dear sir," cried the king, "nothing could be more successful. I know that her word is inviolate. The photograph is now as safe as if it were in the fire."

"I am glad to hear your majesty say so."

"I am immensely indebted to you. Pray tell me in what way I can reward you. This ring—" He slipped an emerald snake ring from his finger, and held it out upon the palm of his hand.

"Your majesty has something which I should value even more highly," said Holmes.

"You have but to name it."

"This photograph!"

The king stared at him in amazement.

"Irene's photograph!" he cried. "Certainly, if you wish it."

"I thank your majesty. Then there is no more to be done in the matter. I have the honor to wish you a very good morning." He bowed, and turning away without observing the hand which the king had stretched out to him, he set off in my company for his chambers.

And that was how a great scandal threatened to affect the kingdom of Bohemia, and how the best plans of Mr. Sherlock Holmes were beaten by a woman's wit. He used to make merry over the cleverness of women, but I have not heard him do it of late. And when he speaks of Irene Adler, or when he refers to her photograph, it is always under the honorable title of *the* woman.

A CASE OF IDENTITY.

"My dear fellow," said Sherlock Holmes, as we sat on either side of the fire in his lodgings at Baker Street, "life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent. We would not dare to conceive the things which are really mere commonplaces of existence. If we could fly out of that window hand in hand, hover over this great city, gently remove the roofs, and peep in at the queer things which are going on, the strange coincidences, the plannings, the cross-purposes, the wonderful chains of events, working through generations, and leading to the most *outré* results, it would make all fiction, with its conventionalities and foreseen conclusions, most stale and unprofitable."

"And yet I am not convinced of it," I answered.

"The cases which come to light in the papers are, as a rule, bald enough, and vulgar enough. We have in our police reports realism pushed to its extreme limits, and yet the result is, it must be confessed, neither fascinating nor artistic."

"A certain selection and discretion must be used

in producing a realistic effect," remarked Holmes. "This is wanting in the police report, where more stress is laid perhaps upon the platitudes of the magistrate than upon the details, which to an observer contain the vital essence of the whole matter. Depend upon it, there is nothing so unnatural as the commonplace."

I smiled and shook my head. "I can quite understand your thinking so," I said. "Of course, in your position of unofficial adviser and helper to everybody who is absolutely puzzled, throughout three continents, you are brought in contact with all that is strange and *bizarre*. But here"—I picked up the morning paper from the ground—"let us put it to a practical test. Here is the first heading upon which I come. 'A husband's cruelty to his wife.' There is half a column of print, but I know without reading it that it is all perfectly familiar to me. There is, of course, the other woman, the drink, the push, the blow, the bruise, the unsympathetic sister or landlady. The crudest of writers could invent nothing more crude."

"Indeed your example is an unfortunate one for your argument," said Holmes, taking the paper, and glancing his eye down it. "This is the Dundas separation case, and, as it happens, I was engaged in clearing up some small points in connection with it. The husband was a teetotaler, there was no other woman, and the conduct complained of was that he had drifted into the habit of winding up every meal by taking out his false teeth and hurling them at his wife, which you will allow is not an action

likely to occur to the imagination of the average story-teller. Take a pinch of snuff, doctor, and acknowledge that I have scored over you in your example."

He held out his snuff-box of old gold, with a great amethyst in the center of the lid. Its splendor was in such contrast to his homely ways and simple life that I could not help commenting upon it.

"Ah!" said he, "I forgot that I had not seen you for some weeks. It is a little souvenir from the King of Bohemia, in return for my assistance in the case of the Irene Adler papers."

"And the ring?" I asked, glancing at a remarkable brilliant which sparkled upon his finger.

"It was from the reigning family of Holland, though the matter in which I served them was of such delicacy that I cannot confide it even to you, who have been good enough to chronicle one or two of my little problems."

"And have you any on hand just now?" I asked with interest.

"Some ten or twelve, but none which present any features of interest. They are important, you understand, without being interesting. Indeed I have found that it is usually in unimportant matters that there is a field for the observation, and for the quick analysis of cause and effect which gives the charm to an investigation. The larger crimes are apt to be the simpler, for the bigger the crime, the more obvious, as a rule, is the motive. In these cases, save for one rather intricate matter which has been referred to me from Marseilles, there is noth-

ing which presents any features of interest. It is possible, however, that I may have something better before very many minutes are over, for this is one of my clients, or I am much mistaken."

He had risen from his chair, and was standing between the parted blinds, gazing down into the dull, neutral-tinted London street. Looking over his shoulder, I saw that on the pavement opposite there stood a large woman with a heavy fur boa round her neck, and a large curling red feather in a broad-brimmed hat which was tilted in a coquettish Duchess-of-Devonshire fashion over her ear.

From under this great panoply she peeped up in a nervous, hesitating fashion at our windows, while her body oscillated backward and forward, and her fingers fidgeted with her glove buttons. Suddenly, with a plunge, as of the swimmer who leaves the bank, she hurried across the road, and we heard the sharp clang of the bell.

"I have seen those symptoms before," said Holmes, throwing his cigarette into the fire. "Oscillation upon the pavement always means an *affaire de cœur*. She would like advice, but is not sure that the matter is not too delicate for communication. And yet even here we may discriminate. When a woman has been seriously wronged by a man, she no longer oscillates, and the usual symptom is a broken bell wire. Here we may take it that there is a love matter, but that the maiden is not so much angry as perplexed or grieved. But here she comes in person to resolve our doubts."

As he spoke, there was a tap at the door, and the

boy in buttons entered to announce Miss Mary Sutherland, while the lady herself loomed behind his small black figure like a full-sailed merchantman behind a tiny pilot boat. Sherlock Holmes welcomed her with the easy courtesy for which he was remarkable, and having closed the door, and bowed her into an armchair, he looked her over in the minute, and yet abstracted fashion which was peculiar to him.

"Do you not find," he said, "that with your short sight it is a little trying to do so much typewriting?"

"I did at first," she answered, "but now I know where the letters are without looking." Then, suddenly realizing the full purport of his words, she gave a violent start, and looked up with fear and astonishment upon her broad, good-humored face. "You've heard about me, Mr. Holmes," she cried, "else how could you know all that?"

"Never mind," said Holmes, laughing, "it is my business to know things. Perhaps I have trained myself to see what others overlook. If not, why should you come to consult me?"

"I came to you, sir, because I heard of you from Mrs. Etherege, whose husband you found so easily when the police and every one had given him up for dead. Oh, Mr. Holmes, I wish you would do as much for me. I'm not rich, but still I have a hundred a year in my own right, besides the little that I make by the machine, and I would give it all to know what has become of Mr. Hosmer Angel."

"Why did you come away to consult me in such

a hurry?" asked Sherlock Holmes, with his finger-tips together, and his eyes to the ceiling.

Again a startled look came over the somewhat vacuous face of Miss Mary Sutherland. "Yes, I did bang out of the house," she said, "for it made me angry to see the easy way in which Mr. Windibank—that is, my father—took it all. He would not go to the police, and he would not go to you, and so at last, as he would do nothing, and kept on saying that there was no harm done, it made me mad, and I just on with my things and came right away to you."

"Your father," said Holmes, "your stepfather, surely, since the name is different."

"Yes, my stepfather. I call him father, though it sounds funny, too, for he is only five years and two months older than myself."

"And your mother is alive?"

"Oh, yes; mother is alive and well. I wasn't best pleased, Mr. Holmes, when she married again so soon after father's death, and a man who was nearly fifteen years younger than herself. Father was a plumber in the Tottenham Court Road, and he left a tidy business behind him, which mother carried on with Mr. Hardy, the foreman; but when Mr. Windibank came he made her sell the business, for he was very superior, being a traveler in wines. They got four thousand seven hundred for the good-will and interest, which wasn't near as much as father could have got if he had been alive."

I had expected to see Sherlock Holmes impatient under this rambling and inconsequential narrative,

but, on the contrary, he had listened with the greatest concentration of attention.

"Your own little income," he asked, "does it come out of the business?"

"Oh, no, sir. It is quite separate, and was left me by my uncle Ned in Auckland. It is in New Zealand stock, paying four and a half per cent. Two thousand five hundred pounds was the amount, but I can only touch the interest."

"You interest me extremely," said Holmes. "And since you draw so large a sum as a hundred a year, with what you earn into the bargain, you no doubt travel a little, and indulge yourself in every way. I believe that a single lady can get on very nicely upon an income of about sixty pounds."

"I could do with much less than that, Mr. Holmes, but you understand that as long as I live at home I don't wish to be a burden to them, and so they have the use of the money just while I am staying with them. Of course that is only just for the time. Mr. Windibank draws my interest every quarter, and pays it over to mother, and I find that I can do pretty well with what I earn at typewriting. It brings me twopence a sheet, and I can often do from fifteen to twenty sheets in a day."

"You have made your position very clear to me," said Holmes. "This is my friend, Doctor Watson, before whom you can speak as freely as before myself. Kindly tell us now all about your connection with Mr. Hosmer Angel."

A flush stole over Miss Sutherland's face, and she

picked nervously at the fringe of her jacket. "I met him first at the gas-fitters' ball," she said. "They used to send father tickets when he was alive, and then afterward they remembered us, and sent them to mother. Mr. Windibank did not wish us to go. He never did wish us to go anywhere. He would get quite mad if I wanted so much as to join a Sunday-school treat. But this time I was set on going, and I would go, for what right had he to prevent? He said the folk were not fit for us to know, when all father's friends were to be there. And he said that I had nothing fit to wear, when I had my purple plush that I had never so much as taken out of the drawer. At last, when nothing else would do, he went off to France upon the business of the firm; but we went, mother and I, with Mr. Hardy, who used to be our foreman, and it was there I met Mr. Hosmer Angel."

"I suppose," said Holmes, "that when Mr. Windibank came back from France, he was very annoyed at your having gone to the ball?"

"Oh, well, he was very good about it. He laughed, I remember, and shrugged his shoulders, and said there was no use denying anything to a woman, for she would have her way."

"I see. Then at the gas-fitters' ball you met, as I understand, a gentleman called Mr. Hosmer Angel?"

"Yes, sir. I met him that night, and he called next day to ask if we had got home all safe, and after that we met him—that is to say, Mr. Holmes, I met him twice for walks, but after that father

came back again, and Mr. Hosmer Angel could not come to the house any more."

"No?"

"Well, you know, father didn't like anything of the sort. He wouldn't have any visitors if he could help it, and he used to say that a woman should be happy in her own family circle. But then, as I used to say to mother, a woman wants her own circle to begin with, and I had not got mine yet."

"But how about Mr. Hosmer Angel? Did he make no attempt to see you?"

"Well, father was going off to France again in a week, and Hosmer wrote and said that it would be safer and better not to see each other until he had gone. We could write in the meantime, and he used to write every day. I took the letters in the morning, so there was no need for father to know."

"Were you engaged to the gentleman at this time?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Holmes. We were engaged after the first walk that we took. Hosmer—Mr. Angel—was a cashier in an office in Leadenhall Street—and—"

"What office?"

"That's the worst of it, Mr. Holmes, I don't know."

"Where did he live, then?"

"He slept on the premises."

"And you don't know his address?"

"No—except that it was Leadenhall Street."

"Where did you address your letters, then?"

"To the Leadenhall Street Post-office, to be left till called for. He said that if they were sent to the office he would be chaffed by all the other clerks about having letters from a lady, so I offered to typewrite them, like he did his, but he wouldn't have that, for he said that when I wrote them they seemed to come from me, but when they were typewritten he always felt that the machine had come between us. That will just show you how fond he was of me, Mr. Holmes, and the little things that he would think of."

"It was most suggestive," said Holmes. "It has long been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important. Can you remember any other little things about Mr. Hosmer Angel?"

"He was a very shy man, Mr. Holmes. He would rather walk with me in the evening than in the daylight, for he said that he hated to be conspicuous. Very retiring and gentlemanly he was. Even his voice was gentle. He'd had the quinsy and swollen glands when he was young, he told me, and it had left him with a weak throat and a hesitating, whispering fashion of speech. He was always well-dressed, very neat and plain, but his eyes were weak, just as mine are, and he wore tinted glasses against the glare."

"Well, and what happened when Mr. Windibank, your stepfather, returned to France?"

"Mr. Hosmer Angel came to the house again, and proposed that we should marry before father came back. He was in dreadful earnest, and made me

swear, with my hands on the Testament, that whatever happened I would always be true to him. Mother said he was quite right to make me swear, and that it was a sign of his passion. Mother was all in his favor from the first, and was even fonder of him than I was. Then, when they talked of marrying within the week, I began to ask about father; but they both said never to mind about father, but just to tell him afterward, and mother said she would make it all right with him. I didn't quite like that, Mr. Holmes. It seemed funny that I should ask his leave, as he was only a few years older than me; but I didn't want to do anything on the sly, so I wrote to father at Bordeaux, where the company has its French offices, but the letter came back to me on the very morning of the wedding."

"It missed him, then?"

"Yes, sir, for he had started to England just before it arrived."

"Ha! that was unfortunate. Your wedding was arranged, then, for the Friday. Was it to be in church?"

"Yes, sir, but very quietly. It was to be at St. Saviour's, near King's Cross, and we were to have breakfast afterward at the St. Pancras Hotel. Hosmer came for us in a hansom, but as there were two of us, he put us both into it, and stepped himself into a four-wheeler, which happened to be the only other cab in the street. We got to the church first, and when the four-wheeler drove up we waited for him to step out, but he never did, and when the

cabman got down from the box and looked, there was no one there! The cabman said that he could not imagine what had become of him, for he had seen him get in with his own eyes. That was last Friday, Mr. Holmes, and I have never seen or heard anything since then to throw any light upon what became of him."

"It seems to me that you have been very shamefully treated," said Holmes.

"Oh, no, sir! He was too good and kind to leave me so. Why, all the morning he was saying to me that, whatever happened, I was to be true; and that even if something quite unforeseen occurred to separate us, I was always to remember that I was pledged to him, and that he would claim his pledge sooner or later. It seemed strange talk for a wedding morning, but what has happened since gives a meaning to it."

"Most certainly it does. Your own opinion is, then, that some unforeseen catastrophe has occurred to him?"

"Yes, sir. I believe that he foresaw some danger, or else he would not have talked so. And then I think that what he foresaw happened."

"But you have no notion as to what it could have been?"

"None."

"One more question. How did your mother take the matter?"

"She was angry, and said that I was never to speak of the matter again."

"And your father? Did you tell him?"

"Yes, and he seemed to think, with me, that something had happened, and that I should hear of Hosmer again. As he said, what interest could any one have in bringing me to the door of the church, and then leaving me? Now, if he had borrowed my money, or if he had married me and got my money settled on him, there might be some reason; but Hosmer was very independent about money, and never would look at a shilling of mine. And yet what could have happened? And why could he not write? Oh! it drives me half mad to think of, and I can't sleep a wink at night." She pulled a little handkerchief out of her muff, and began to sob heavily into it.

"I shall glance into the case for you," said Holmes, rising, "and I have no doubt that we shall reach some definite result. Let the weight of the matter rest upon me now, and do not let your mind dwell upon it further. Above all, try to let Mr. Hosmer Angel vanish from your memory, as he has done from your life."

"Then you don't think I'll see him again?"

"I fear not."

"Then what has happened to him?"

"You will leave that question in my hands. I should like an accurate description of him, and any letters of his which you can spare."

"I advertised for him in last Saturday's *Chronicle*," said she. "Here is the slip, and here are four letters from him."

"Thank you. And your address?"

"No. 31, Lyon Place, Camberwell."

"Mr. Angel's address you never had, I understand. Where is your father's place of business?"

"He travels for Westhouse & Marbank, the great claret importers of Fenchurch Street."

"Thank you. You have made your statement very clearly. You will leave the papers here, and remember the advice which I have given you. Let the whole incident be a sealed book, and do not allow it to affect your life."

"You are very kind, Mr. Holmes, but I cannot do that. I shall be true to Hosmer. He shall find me ready when he comes back."

For all the preposterous hat and the vacuous face, there was something noble in the simple faith of our visitor which compelled our respect. She laid her little bundle of papers upon the table, and went her way, with a promise to come again whenever she might be summoned.

Sherlock Holmes sat silent for a few minutes with his finger-tips still pressed together, his legs stretched out in front of him, and his gaze directed upward to the ceiling. Then he took down from the rack the old and oily clay pipe, which was to him as a counselor, and, having lighted it, he leaned back in his chair, with thick blue cloud-wreaths spinning up from him, and a look of infinite languor in his face.

"Quite an interesting study, that maiden," he observed. "I found her more interesting than her little problem, which, by the way, is rather a trite one. You will find parallel cases, if you consult my index, in Andover in '77, and there was some-

thing of the sort at the Hague last year. Old as is the idea, however, there were one or two details which were new to me. But the maiden herself was most instructive."

"You appeared to read a good deal upon her which was quite invisible to me," I remarked.

"Not invisible, but unnoticed, Watson. You did not know where to look, and so you missed all that was important. I can never bring you to realize the importance of sleeves, the suggestiveness of thumb-nails, or the great issues that may hang from a boot-lace. Now, what did you gather from that woman's appearance? Describe it."

"Well, she had a slate-colored, broad-brimmed straw hat, with a feather of a brickish red. Her jacket was black, with black beads sewed upon it and a fringe of little black jet ornaments. Her dress was brown, rather darker than coffee color, with a little purple plush at the neck and sleeves. Her gloves were grayish, and were worn through at the right forefinger. Her boots I didn't observe. She had small round, hanging gold earrings, and a general air of being fairly well to do, in a vulgar, comfortable, easy-going way."

Sherlock Holmes clapped his hands softly together and chuckled.

"'Pon my word, Watson, you are coming along wonderfully. You have really done very well indeed. It is true that you have missed everything of importance, but you have hit upon the method, and you have a quick eye for color. Never trust to general impressions, my boy, but concentrate your-

self upon details. My first glance is always at a woman's sleeve. In a man it is perhaps better first to take the knee of the trouser. As you observe, this woman had plush upon her sleeves, which is a most useful material for showing traces. The double line a little above the wrist, where the typewritist presses against the table, was beautifully defined. The sewing-machine, of the hand type, leaves a similar mark, but only on the left arm, and on the side of it furthest from the thumb, instead of being right across the broadest part, as this was. I then glanced at her face, and observing the dint of a *pince-nez* at either side of her nose, I ventured a remark upon short sight and typewriting, which seemed to surprise her."

"It surprised me."

"But, surely, it was very obvious. I was then much surprised and interested on glancing down to observe that, though the boots which she was wearing were not unlike each other, they were really odd ones, the one having a slightly decorated toe-cap and the other a plain one. One was buttoned only in the two lower buttons out of five, and the other at the first, third and fifth. Now, when you see that a young lady, otherwise neatly dressed, has come away from home with odd boots, half-buttoned it is no great deduction to say that she came away in a hurry."

"And what else?" I asked, keenly interested, as I always was, by my friend's incisive reasoning.

"I noted, in passing, that she had written a note before leaving home, but after being fully dressed

You observed that her right glove was torn at the forefinger, but you did not, apparently, see that both glove and finger were stained with violet ink. She had written in a hurry, and dipped her pen too deep. It must have been this morning, or the mark would not remain clear upon the finger. All this is amusing, though rather elementary, but I must go back to business, Watson. Would you mind reading me the advertised description of Mr. Hosmer Angel?"

I held the little printed slip to the light. "Missing," it said, "on the morning of the fourteenth, a gentleman named Hosmer Angel. About five feet seven inches in height; strongly built, sallow complexion, black hair, a little bald in the center, bushy, black side-whiskers and mustache; tinted glasses; slight infirmity of speech. Was dressed, when last seen, in black frock coat faced with silk, black waistcoat, gold Albert chain, and gray Harris tweed trousers, with brown gaiters over elastic-sided boots. Known to have been employed in an office in Leadenhall Street. Anybody bringing," etc., etc.

"That will do," said Holmes. "As to the letters," he continued, glancing over them, "they are very commonplace. Absolutely no clew in them to Mr. Angel, save that he quotes Balzac once. There is one remarkable point, however, which will no doubt strike you."

"They are typewritten," I remarked.

"Not only that, but the signature is typewritten. Look at the neat little 'Hosmer Angel' at the bottom. There is a date, you see, but no superscription except Leadenhall Street, which is rather

vague. The point about the signature is very suggestive—in fact, we may call it conclusive."

"Of what?"

"My dear fellow, is it possible you do not see how strongly it bears upon the case?"

"I cannot say that I do, unless it were that he wished to be able to deny his signature if an action for breach of promise were instituted."

"No, that was not the point. However, I shall write two letters which should settle the matter. One is to a firm in the city, the other is to the young lady's stepfather, Mr. Windibank, asking him whether he could meet us here at six o'clock to-morrow evening. It is just as well that we should do business with the male relatives. And now, doctor, we can do nothing until the answers to those letters come, so we may put our little problem upon the shelf for the interim."

I had had so many reasons to believe in my friend's subtle powers of reasoning, and extraordinary energy in action, that I felt that he must have some solid grounds for the assured and easy demeanor with which he treated the singular mystery which he had been called upon to fathom. Once only had I known him to fail, in the case of the King of Bohemia and of the Irene Adler photograph, but when I looked back to the weird business of the "Sign of Four," and the extraordinary circumstances connected with the "Study in Scarlet," I felt that it would be a strange tangle indeed which he could not unravel.

I left him then, still puffing at his black clay pipe,

with the conviction that when I came again on the next evening I would find that he held in his hands all the clews which would lead up to the identity of the disappearing bridegroom of Miss Mary Sutherland.

A professional case of great gravity was engaging my own attention at the time, and the whole of next day I was busy at the bedside of the sufferer. It was not until close upon six o'clock that I found myself free, and was able to spring into a hansom and drive to Baker Street, half afraid that I might be too late to assist at the *dénouement* of the little mystery. I found Sherlock Holmes alone, however, half asleep, with his long, thin form curled up in the recesses of his armchair. A formidable array of bottles and test-tubes, with the pungent, cleanly smell of hydrochloric acid, told me that he had spent his day in the chemical work which was so dear to him.

"Well, have you solved it?" I asked as I entered

"Yes. It was the bisulphate of baryta."

"No, no; the mystery!" I cried.

"Oh, that! I thought of the salt that I have been working upon. There was never any mystery in the matter, though, as I said yesterday, some of the details are of interest. The only drawback is that there is no law, I fear, that can touch the scoundrel."

"Who was he, then, and what was his object in deserting Miss Sutherland?"

The question was hardly out of my mouth, and Holmes had not yet opened his lips to reply, when

we heard a heavy footfall in the passage, and a tap at the door.

"This is the girl's stepfather, Mr. James Windibank," said Holmes. "He has written to me to say that he would be here at six. Come in!"

The man who entered was a sturdy, middle-sized fellow, some thirty years of age, clean shaven, and sallow skinned, with a bland, insinuating manner, and a pair of wonderfully sharp and penetrating gray eyes. He shot a questioning glance at each of us, placed his shiny top hat upon the sideboard, and, with a slight bow, sidled down into the nearest chair.

"Good evening, Mr. James Windibank," said Holmes. "I think this typewritten letter is from you, in which you made an appointment with me for six o'clock?"

"Yes, sir. I am afraid that I am a little late, but I am not quite my own master, you know. I am sorry that Miss Sutherland has troubled you about this little matter, for I think it is far better not to wash linen of the sort in public. It was quite against my wishes that she came, but she is a very excitable, impulsive girl, as you may have noticed, and she is not easily controlled when she has made up her mind on a point. Of course, I did not mind you so much, as you are not connected with the official police, but it is not pleasant to have a family misfortune like this noised abroad. Besides, it is a useless expense, for how could you possibly find this Hosmer Angel?"

"On the contrary," said Holmes, quietly, "I have

every reason to believe that I will succeed in discovering Mr. Hosmer Angel."

Mr Windibank gave a violent start, and dropped his gloves. "I am delighted to hear it," he said.

"It is a curious thing," remarked Holmes, "that a typewriter has really quite as much individuality as a man's handwriting. Unless they are quite new no two of them write exactly alike. Some letters get more worn than others, and some wear only on one side. Now, you remark in this note of yours, Mr. Windibank, that in every case there is some little slurring over the *e*, and a slight defect in the tail of the *r*. There are fourteen other characteristics, but those are the more obvious."

"We do all our correspondence with this machine at the office, and no doubt it is a little worn," our visitor answered, glancing keenly at Holmes with his bright little eyes.

"And now I will show you what is really a very interesting study, Mr. Windibank," Holmes continued. "I think of writing another little monograph some of these days on the typewriter and its relation to crime. It is a subject to which I have devoted some little attention. I have here four letters which purport to come from the missing man. They are all typewritten. In each case, not only are the *e's* slurred and the *r's* tailless, but you will observe, if you care to use my magnifying lens, that the fourteen other characteristics to which I have alluded are there as well."

Mr. Windibank sprung out of his chair, and picked up his hat. "I cannot waste time over this

sort of fantastic talk, Mr. Holmes," he said. "If you can catch the man, catch him, and let me know when you have done it."

"Certainly," said Holmes, stepping over and turning the key in the door. "I let you know, then, that I have caught him!"

"What! where?" shouted Mr. Windibank, turning white to his lips, and glancing about him like a rat in a trap.

"Oh, it won't do—really it won't," said Holmes, suavely. "There is no possible getting out of it, Mr. Windibank. It is quite too transparent, and it was a very bad compliment when you said that it was impossible for me to solve so simple a question. That's right! Sit down, and let us talk it over."

Our visitor collapsed into a chair, with a ghastly face, and a glitter of moisture on his brow. "It—it's not actionable," he stammered.

"I am very much afraid that it is not; but between ourselves, Windibank, it was as cruel, and selfish, and heartless a trick in a petty way as ever came before me. Now, let me just run over the course of events, and you will contradict me if I go wrong."

The man sat huddled up in his chair, with his head sunk upon his breast, like one who is utterly crushed. Holmes stuck his feet up on the corner of the mantel-piece, and, leaning back with his hands in his pockets, began talking, rather to himself, as it seemed, than to us.

"The man married a woman very much older than himself for her money," said he, "and he

enjoyed the use of the money of the daughter as long as she lived with them. It was a considerable sum, for people in their position, and the loss of it would have made a serious difference. It was worth an effort to preserve it. The daughter was of a good, amiable disposition, but affectionate and warm-hearted in her ways, so that it was evident that with her fair personal advantages, and her little income, she would not be allowed to remain single long. Now her marriage would mean, of course, the loss of a hundred a year, so what does her step-father do to prevent it? He takes the obvious course of keeping her at home, and forbidding her to seek the company of people of her own age. But soon he found that that would not answer forever. She became restive, insisted upon her rights, and finally announced her positive intention of going to a certain ball. What does her clever stepfather do then? He conceives an idea more creditable to his head than to his heart. With the connivance and assistance of his wife, he disguised himself, covered those keen eyes with tinted glasses, masked the face with a mustache and a pair of bushy whiskers, sunk that clear voice into an insinuating whisper, and doubly secure on account of the girl's short sight, he appears as Mr. Hosmer Angel, and keeps off other lovers by making love himself."

"It was only a joke at first," groaned our visitor. "We never thought that she would have been so carried away."

"Very likely not. However that may be, the young lady was very decididly carried away, and

having quite made up her mind that her stepfather was in France, the suspicion of treachery never for an instant entered her mind. She was flattered by the gentleman's attentions, and the effect was increased by the loudly expressed admiration of her mother. Then Mr. Angel began to call, for it was obvious that the matter should be pushed as far as it would go, if a real effect were to be produced. There were meetings, and an engagement, which would finally secure the girl's affections from turning toward any one else. But the deception could not be kept up forever. These pretended journeys to France were rather cumbrous. The thing to do was clearly to bring the business to an end in such a dramatic manner that it would leave a permanent impression upon the young lady's mind, and prevent her from looking upon any other suitor for some time to come. Hence those vows of fidelity exacted upon a Testament, and hence also the allusions to a possibility of something happening on the very morning of the wedding. James Windibank wished Miss Sutherland to be so bound to Hosmer Angel, and so uncertain as to his fate, that for ten years to come, at any rate, she would not listen to another man. As far as the church door he brought her, and then, as he could go no further, he conveniently vanished away by the old trick of stepping in at one door of a four-wheeler and out at the other. I think that that was the chain of events, Mr. Windibank!"

Our visitor had recovered something of his assurance while Holmes had been talking, and he rose

from his chair now with a cold sneer upon his pale face.

"It may be so, or it may not, Mr. Holmes," said he; "but if you are so very sharp you ought to be sharp enough to know that it is you who are breaking the law now, and not me. I have done nothing actionable from the first, but as long as you keep that door locked you lay yourself open to an action for assault and illegal constraint."

"The law cannot, as you say, touch you," said Holmes, unlocking and throwing open the door, "yet there never was a man who deserved punishment more. If the young lady has a brother or a friend, he ought to lay a whip across your shoulders. By Jove!" he continued, flushing up at the sight of the bitter sneer upon the man's face, "it is not part of my duties to my client, but here's a hunting crop handy, and I think I shall just treat myself to—" He took two swift steps to the whip, but before he could grasp it there was a wild clatter of steps upon the stairs, the heavy hall door banged, and from the window we could see Mr. James Windibank running at the top of his speed down the road.

"There's a cold-blooded scoundrel!" said Holmes laughing as he threw himself down into his chair once more. "That fellow will rise from crime to crime until he does something very bad and ends on a gallows. The case has, in some respects, been not entirely devoid of interest."

"I cannot now entirely see all the steps of your reasoning," I remarked.

"Well, of course it was obvious from the first that this Mr. Hosmer Angel must have some strong object for his curious conduct, and it was equally clear that the only man who really profited by the incident, as far as we could see, was the stepfather. Then the fact that the two men were never together, but that the one always appeared when the other was away, was suggestive. So were the tinted spectacles and the curious voice, which both hinted at a disguise, as did the bushy whiskers. My suspicions were all confirmed by his peculiar action in typewriting his signature, which, of course, inferred that his handwriting was so familiar to her that she would recognize even the smallest sample of it. You see all these isolated facts, together with many minor ones, all pointed in the same direction."

"And how did you verify them?"

"Having once spotted my man, it was easy to get corroboration. I knew the firm for which this man worked. Having taken the printed description, I eliminated everything from it which could be the result of a disguise—the whiskers, the glasses, the voice, and I sent it to the firm with a request that they would inform me whether it answered to the description of any of their travelers. I had already noticed the peculiarities of the typewriter, and I wrote to the man himself at his business address, asking him if he would come here. As I expected, his reply was typewritten, and revealed the same trivial but characteristic defects. The same post brought me a letter from Westhouse & Marbank, of Fenchurch Street, to say that the description tallied

in every respect with that of their employé, James Windibank. *Voilà tout!*"

"And Miss Sutherland?"

"If I tell her she will not believe me. You may remember the old Persian saying, 'There is danger for him who taketh the tiger cub, and danger also for whoso snatches a delusion from a woman.' There is as much sense in Hafiz as in Horace, and as much knowledge of the world."

MY FRIEND THE MURDERER.

"NUMBER 43 is no better, doctor," said the head-warder, in a slightly reproachful accent, looking in round the corner of my door.

"Confound 43!" I responded from behind the pages of the *Australian Sketcher*.

"And 61 says his tubes are paining him. Couldn't you do anything for him?"

He is a walking drug-shop," said I. "He has the whole British pharmacopœa inside him. I believe his tubes are as sound as yours are."

"Then there's 7 and 108, they are chronic," continued the warder, glancing down a blue slip of paper. "And 28 knocked off work yesterday—said lifting things gave him a stitch in the side. I want you to have a look at him, if you don't mind, doctor. There's 31, too—him that killed John Adamson in the Corinthian brig—he's been carrying on awful in the night, shrieking and yelling, he has, and no stopping him either."

"All right, I'll have a look at him afterward," I said, tossing my paper carelessly aside, and pouring myself out a cup of coffee. "Nothing else to report, I suppose, warder?"

The official protruded his head a little further into the room. "Beg pardon, doctor," he said, in a confidential tone, "but I notice as 82 has a bit of a cold, and it would be a good excuse for you to visit him and have a chat, maybe."

The cup of coffee was arrested half-way to my lips as I stared in amazement at the man's serious face.

"An excuse?" I said. "An excuse? What the deuce are you talking about, McPherson? You see me trudging about all day at my practise, when I'm not looking after the prisoners, and coming back every night as tired as a dog, and you talk about finding an excuse for doing more work."

"You'd like it, doctor," said Warder McPherson, insinuating one of his shoulders into the room. "That man's story's worth listening to if you could get him to tell it, though he's not what you'd call free in his speech. Maybe you don't know who 82 is?"

"No, I don't, and I don't care either," I answered, in the conviction that some local ruffian was about to be foisted upon me as a celebrity.

"He's Maloney," said the warder, "him that turned Queen's evidence after the murders at Bluemansdyke."

"You don't say so?" I ejaculated, laying down my cup in astonishment. I had heard of this ghastly series of murders, and read an account of them in a London magazine long before setting foot in the colony. I remembered that the atrocities committed had thrown the Burke and Hare crimes completely into the shade, and that one of the most villainous

of the gang had saved his own skin by betraying his companions. "Are you sure?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, it's him right enough. Just you draw him out a bit, and he'll astonish you. He's a man to know, is Maloney; that's to say, in moderation;" and the head grinned, bobbed, and disappeared, leaving me to finish my breakfast and ruminate over what I had heard.

The surgeonship of an Australian prison is not an enviable position. It may be endurable in Melbourne or Sydney, but the little town of Perth has few attractions to recommend it, and those few had been long exhausted. The climate was detestable, and the society far from congenial. Sheep and cattle were the staple support of the community; and their prices, breeding, and diseases the principal topic of conversation. Now as I, being an outsider, possessed neither the one nor the other, and was utterly callous to the new "dip" and the "rot" and other kindred topics, I found myself in a state of mental isolation, and was ready to hail anything which might relieve the monotony of my existence. Maloney, the murderer, had at least some distinctiveness and individuality in his character, and might act as a tonic to a mind sick of the commonplaces of existence. I determined that I should follow the warder's advice, and take the excuse for making his acquaintance. When, therefore, I went upon my usual matutinal round, I turned the lock of the door which bore the convict's number upon it, and walked into the cell.

The man was lying in a heap upon his rough bed

as I entered, but, uncoiling his long limbs, he started up and stared at me with an insolent look of defiance on his face which augured badly for our interview. He had a pale, set face, with sandy hair and a steely-blue eye, with something feline in its expression. His frame was tall and muscular, though there was a curious bend in his shoulders, which almost amounted to a deformity. An ordinary observer meeting him in the street might have put him down as a well-developed man, fairly handsome, and of studious habits—even in the hideous uniform of the rottenest convict establishment he imparted a certain refinement to his carriage which marked him out among the inferior ruffians around him.

"I'm not on the sick-list," he said, gruffly. There was something in the hard, rasping voice which dispelled all softer illusions, and made me realize that I was face to face with the man of the Lena Valley and Bluemansdyke, the bloodiest bush-ranger that ever stuck up a farm or cut the throats of its occupants.

"I know you're not," I answered. "Warder McPherson told me you had a cold, though, and I thought I'd look in and see you."

"Blast Warder McPherson, and blast you, too!" yelled the convict, in a paroxysm of rage. "Oh, that's right," he added in a quieter voice; "hurry away; report me to the governor, do! Get me another six months or so—that's your game."

"I'm not going to report you," I said.

"Eight square feet of ground," he went on, disregarding my protest, and evidently working him-

self into a fury again. "Eight square feet, and I can't have that without being talked to and stared at, and—oh, blast the whole crew of you!" and he raised his two clinched hands above his head and shook them in passionate invective.

"You've got a curious idea of hospitality," I remarked, determined not to lose my temper, and saying almost the first thing that came to my tongue.

To my surprise the words had an extraordinary effect upon him. He seemed completely staggered at my assuming the proposition for which he had been so fiercely contending—namely, that the room in which he stood was his own.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "I didn't mean to be rude. Won't you take a seat?" and he motioned toward a rough trestle, which formed the head-piece of his couch.

I sat down, rather astonished at the sudden change. I don't know that I liked Maloney better under this new aspect. The murderer had, it is true, disappeared for the nonce, but there was something in the smooth tones and obsequious manner which powerfully suggested the witness of the queen, who had stood up and sworn away the lives of his companions in crime.

"How's your chest?" I asked, putting on my professional air.

"Come, drop it, doctor—drop it!" he answered, showing a row of white teeth as he resumed his seat upon the side of the bed. "It wasn't anxiety after my precious health that brought you along here; that story won't wash at all. You came to have

a look at Wolf Tone Maloney, forger, murderer, Sydney-slider, ranger, and government peach. That's about my figure, ain't it? There it is, plain and straight; there's nothing mean about me."

He paused as if he expected me to say something; but as I remained silent, he repeated once or twice, "There's nothing mean about me."

"And why shouldn't I?" he suddenly yelled, his eyes gleaming and his whole satanic nature reasserting itself. "We were bound to swing, one and all, and they were none the worse if I saved myself by turning against them. Every man for himself, say I, and the devil take the luckiest. You haven't a plug of tobacco, doctor, have you?"

He tore at the piece of "Barrett's" which I handed him, as ravenously as a wild beast. It seemed to have the effect of soothing his nerves, for he settled himself down in the bed and reassumed his former deprecating manner.

"You wouldn't like it yourself, you know, doctor," he said: "it's enough to make any man a little queer in his temper. I'm in for six months this time for assault, and very sorry I shall be to go out again, I can tell you. My mind's at ease in here; but when I'm outside, what with the government and what with Tattooed Tom, of Hawkesbury, there's no chance of a quiet life."

"Who is he?" I asked.

"He's the brother of John Grimthorpe, the same that was condemned on my evidence; and an infernal scamp he was, too! Spawn of the devil, both of them! This tattooed one is a murderous

ruffian, and he swore to have my blood after that trial. It's seven year ago, and he's following me yet; I know he is, though he lies low and keeps dark. He came up to me in Ballarat in '75; you can see on the back of my hand here where the bullet clipped me. He tried again in '76, at Port Philip, but I got the drop on him and wounded him badly. He knifed me in '79, though, in a bar at Adelaide, and that made our account about level. He's loafing round again now, and he'll let daylight into me—unless—unless by some extraordinary chance some one does as much for him." And Maloney gave a very ugly smile.

"I don't complain of *him* so much," he continued. "Looking at it in his way, no doubt it is a sort of family matter that can hardly be neglected. It's the government that fetches me. When I think of what I've done for this country, and then of what this country has done for me, it makes me fairly wild—clean drives me off my head. There's no gratitude nor common decency left, doctor!"

He brooded over his wrongs for a few minutes, and then proceeded to lay them before me in detail.

"Here's nine men," he said; "they've been murdering and killing for a matter of three years, and maybe a life a week wouldn't more than average the work that they've done. The government catches them and the government tries them, but they can't convict; and why?—because the witnesses have all had their throats cut, and the whole job's been very neatly done. What happens then? Up comes a citizen called Wolf Tone Maloney; he says, 'The coun-

try needs me, and here I am.' And with that he gives his evidence, convicts the lot, and enables the beaks to hang them. That's what I did. There's nothing mean about me! And now what does the country do in return? Dogs me, sir, spies on me, watches me night and day, turns against the very man that worked so very hard for it. There's something mean about that, anyway. I didn't expect them to knight me, nor to make me colonial secretary; but, damn it! I did expect that they would let me alone!"

"Well," I remonstrated, "if you choose to break laws and assault people, you can't expect it to be looked over on account of former services."

"I don't refer to my present imprisonment, sir," said Maloney, with dignity. "It's the life I've been leading since that cursed trial that takes the soul out of me. Just you sit there on that trestle, and I'll tell you all about it; and then look me in the face and tell me that I've been treated fair by the police."

I shall endeavor to transcribe the experience of the convict in his own words, as far as I can remember them, preserving his curious perversions of right and wrong. I can answer for the truth of his facts, whatever may be said for his deductions from them. Months afterward, Inspector H. W. Hann, formerly governor of the jail at Dunedin, showed me entries in his ledger which corroborated every statement. Maloney reeled the story off in a dull, monotonous voice, with his head sunk upon his breast and his hands between his knees. The

glitter of his serpent-like eyes was the only sign of the emotions which were stirred up by the recollection of the events which he narrated.

You've read of Bluemansdyke (he began, with some pride in his tone). We made it hot while it lasted; but they ran us to earth at last, and a trap called Braxton, with a damned Yankee, took the lot of us. That was in New Zealand, of course, and they took us down to Dunedin, and there they were convicted and hanged. One and all they put up their hands in the dock, and cursed me till your blood would have run cold to hear them—which was scurvy treatment, seeing that we had all been pals together; but they were a blackguard lot, and thought only of themselves. I think it is as well that they were hung.

They took me back to Dunedin Jail, and clapped me into the old cell. The only difference they made was, that I had no work to do and was well fed. I stood this for a week or two, until one day the governor was making his rounds, and I put the matter to him.

"How's this?" I said. "My conditions were a free pardon, and you're keeping me here against the law."

He gave a sort of a smile. "Should you like very much to get out?" he asked.

"So much," said I, "that unless you open that door I'll have an action against you for illegal detention."

He seemed a bit astonished by my resolution.

"You're very anxious to meet your death," he said.

"What d'ye mean?" I asked.

"Come here, and you'll know what I mean," he answered. And he led me down the passage to a window that overlooked the door of the prison. "Look at that!" said he.

I looked out, and there were a dozen or so rough-looking fellows standing outside the street, some of them smoking, some playing cards on the pavement. When they saw me they gave a yell and crowded round the door, shaking their fists and hooting.

"They wait for you, watch and watch about," said the governor. "They're the executive of the vigilance committee. However, since you are determined to go, I can't stop you."

"D'ye call this a civilized land," I cried, "and let a man be murdered in cold blood in open daylight?"

When I said this the governor and the warder and every fool in the place grinned, as if a man's life was a rare good joke.

"You've got the law on your side," says the governor; "so we won't detain you any longer. Show him out, warder."

He'd have done it, too, the black-hearted villain, if I hadn't begged and prayed and offered to pay for my board and lodging, which is more than any prisoner ever did before me. He let me stay on those conditions; and for three months I was caged up there with every larrikin in the township clamoring at the other side of the wall. That was

pretty treatment for a man that had served his country!

At last, one morning up came the governor again.

"Well, Maloney," he said, "how long are you going to honor us with your society?"

I could have put a knife into his cursed body, and would, too, if we had been alone in the bush; but I had to smile, and smooth him and flatter, for I feared that he might have me sent out.

"You're an infernal rascal," he said; those were his very words, to a man that had helped him all he knew how. "I don't want any rough justice here, though; and I think I see my way to getting you out of Dunedin."

"I'll never forget you, governor," said I; and, by God! I never will.

"I don't want your thanks nor your gratitude," he answered; "it's not for your sake that I do it, but simply to keep order in the town. There's a steamer starts from the West Quay to Melbourne to-morrow, and we'll get you aboard it. She is advertised at five in the morning, so have yourself in readiness."

I packed up the few things I had, and was smuggled out by a back door, just before daybreak. I hurried down, took my ticket under the name of Isaac Smith, and got safely aboard the Melbourne boat. I remember hearing her screw grinding into the water as the warps were cast loose, and looking back at the lights of Dunedin as I leaned upon the bulwarks, with the pleasant thought that I was leaving them behind me forever. It seemed to me

that a new world was before me, and that all my troubles had been cast off. I went down below and had some coffee, and came up again feeling better than I had done since the morning that I woke to find that cursed Irishman that took me standing over me with a six-shooter.

Day had dawned by that time, and we were steaming along by the coast, well out of sight of Dunedin. I loafed about for a couple of hours, and when the sun got well up some of the other passengers came on deck and joined me. One of them, a little perky sort of fellow, took a good long look at me, and then came over and began talking.

"Mining, I suppose?" says he.

"Yes," I says.

"Made your pile?" he asks.

"Pretty fair," says I.

"I was at it myself," he says; "I worked at the Nelson fields for three months, and spent all I made in buying a salted claim which busted up the second day. I went at it again, though, and struck it rich; but when the gold wagon was going down to the settlements, it was stuck up by those cursed rangers, and not a red cent left."

"That was a bad job," I says.

"Broke me—ruined me clean. Never mind, I've seen them all hanged for it; that makes it easier to bear. There's only one left—the villain that gave the evidence. I'd die happy if I could come across him. There are two things I have to do if I meet him."

"What's that?" says I, carelessly.

"I've got to ask him where the money lies—they never had time to make away with it, and it's *cachéd* somewhere in the mountains—and then I've got to stretch his neck for him, and send his soul down to join the men that he betrayed."

It seemed to me that I knew something about that *caché*, and I felt like laughing; but he was watching me, and it struck me that he had a nasty, vindictive kind of mind.

"I'm going up on the bridge," I said, for he was not a man whose acquaintance I cared much about making.

He wouldn't hear of my leaving him, though. "We're both miners," he says, "and we're pals for the voyage. Come down to the bar. I'm not too poor to shout."

I couldn't refuse him well, and we went down together; and that was the beginning of the trouble. What harm was I doing any one on the ship? All I asked for was a quiet life, leaving others alone and getting left alone myself. No man could ask fairer than that. And now just you listen to what came of it.

We were passing the front of the ladies' cabin, on our way to the saloon, when out comes a servant lass—a freckled currency she-devil—with a baby in her arms. We were brushing past her, when she gave a scream like a railway whistle, and nearly dropped the kid. My nerves gave a sort of a jump when I heard that scream, but I turned and begged her pardon, letting on that I thought I might have trod on her foot. I knew the game was up, though,

when I saw her white face, aud her leaning against the door and pointing.

"It's him!" she cried; "it's him! I saw him in the court-house. Oh, don't let him hurt the baby!"

"Who is it?" asked the steward and half a dozen others in a breath.

"It's him—Maloney—Maloney, the murderer—oh, take him away—take him away!"

I don't rightly remember what happened just at that moment. The furniture and me seemed to get kind of mixed, and there was cursing, and smashing, and some one shouting for his gold, and a general stamping round. When I got steadied a bit, I found somebody's hand in my mouth. From what I gathered afterward, I concluded that it belonged to that same little man with the vicious way of talking. He got some of it out again, but that was because the others were choking me. A poor chap can get no fair play in this world when once he is down—still, I think he will remember me till the day of his death—longer, I hope.

They dragged me out on to the poop and held a damned court-martial—on *me*, mind you; *me*, that had thrown over my pals in order to serve them. What were they to do with me? Some said this, some said that; but it ended by the captain deciding to send me ashore. The ship stopped, they lowered a boat, and I was hoisted in, the whole gang of them hooting at me from over the bulwarks. I saw the man I spoke of tying up his hand, though, and I felt that things might be worse.

I changed my opinion before we got to the land.

I had reckoned on the shore being deserted, and that I might make my way inland; but the ship had stopped too near the Heads, and a dozen beach-combers and such like had come down to the water's edge and were staring at us, wondering what the boat was after. When we got to the edge of the surf the cockswain hailed them, and after singing out who I was, he and his men threw me into the water. You may well look surprised—neck and crop into ten feet of water, with sharks as thick as green parrots in the bush, and I heard them laughing as I floundered to the shore.

I soon saw it was a worse job than ever. As I came scrambling out through the weeds, I was collared by a big chap with a velveteen coat, and half a dozen others got round me and held me fast. Most of them looked simple fellows enough, and I was not afraid of them; but there was one in a cabbage-tree hat that had a very nasty expression on his face, and the big man seemed to be chummy with him.

They dragged me up the beach, and then they let go their hold of me and stood round in a circle.

"Well, mate," says the man with the hat, "we've been looking out for you some time in these parts."

"And very good of you, too," I answers.

"None of your jaw," says he. "Come, boys, what shall it be—hanging, drowning, or shooting? Look sharp!"

This looked a bit too like business. "No, you don't!" I said. "I've got government protection, and it'll be murder."

"That's what they call it," answered the one in the velveteen coat, as cheery as a piping crow.

"And you're going to murder me for being a ranger?"

"Ranger be damned!" said the man. "We're going to hang you for peaching against your pals; and that's an end of the palaver."

They slung a rope round my neck and dragged me up to the edge of the bush. There were some big she-oaks and blue-gums, and they pitched on one of these for the wicked deed. They ran the rope over a branch, tied my hands, and told me to say my prayers. It seemed as if it was all up; but Providence interfered to save me. It sounds nice enough sitting here and telling about it, sir; but it was sick work to stand with nothing but the beach in front of you, and the long white line of surf, with the steamer in the distance, and a set of bloody-minded villains round you thirsting for your life.

I never thought I'd owe anything good to the police; but they saved me that time. A troop of them were riding from Hawkes Point Station to Dunedin, and hearing that something was up, they came down through the bush and interrupted the proceedings. I've heard some bands in my time, doctor, but I never heard music like the jingle of those traps' spurs and harness as they galloped out on to the open. They tried to hang me even then, but the police were too quick for them; and the man with the hat got one over the head with the flat of a sword. I was clapped on to a horse, and before evening I found myself in my old quarters in the city jail.

The governor wasn't to be done, though. He was determined to get rid of me, and I was equally anxious to see the last of him. He waited a week or so until the excitement had begun to die away, and then he smuggled me aboard a three-masted schooner bound to Sydney with tallow and hides.

We got far away to sea without a hitch, and things began to look a bit more rosy. I made sure that I had seen the last of the prison, anyway. The crew had a sort of an idea who I was, and if there'd been any rough weather, they'd have hove me overboard, like enough; for they were a rough, ignorant lot, and had a notion that I brought bad luck to the ship. We had a good passage, however, and I was landed safe and sound upon Sydney Quay.

Now just you listen to what happened next. You'd have thought they would have been sick of ill-using me and following me by this time—wouldn't you, now? Well, just you listen. It seems that a cursed steamer started from Dunedin to Sydney on the very day we left, and got in before us, bringing news that I was coming. Blessed if they hadn't called a meeting—a regular mass-meeting—at the docks to discuss about it, and I marched right into it when I landed. They didn't take long about arresting me, and I listened to all the speeches and resolutions. If I'd been a prince there couldn't have been more excitement. The end of all was that they agreed that it wasn't right that New Zealand should be allowed to foist her criminals upon her neighbors, and that I was to be sent back again by the next boat. So they posted me off again as if I was a

damned parcel; and after another eight-hundred-mile journey I found myself back for the third time moving in the place that I started from.

By this time I had begun to think that I was going to spend the rest of my existence traveling about from one port to another. Every man's hand seemed turned against me, and there was no peace or quiet in any direction. I was about sick of it by the time I had come back; and if I could have taken to the bush I'd have done it, and chanced it with my old pals. They were too quick for me, though, and kept me under lock and key; but I managed, in spite of them, to negotiate that *caché* I told you of, and sewed the gold up in my belt. I spent another month in jail, and then they slipped me aboard a bark that was bound for England.

This time the crew never knew who I was, but the captain had a pretty good idea, though he didn't let on to me that he had any suspicions. I guessed from the first that the man was a villain. We had a fair passage, except a gale or two off the Cape; and I began to feel like a free man when I saw the blue loom of the old country, and the saucy little pilot-boat from Falmouth dancing toward us over the waves. We ran down the Channel, and before we reached Gravesend I had agreed with the pilot that he should take me ashore with him when he left. It was at this time that the captain showed me that I was right in thinking him a meddling, disagreeable man. I got my things packed, such as they were, and left him talking earnestly to the pilot, while I went below for my breakfast. When

I came up again we were fairly into the mouth of the river, and the boat in which I was to have gone ashore had left us. The skipper said the pilot had forgotten me; but that was too thin, and I began to fear that all my old troubles were going to commence once more.

It was not long before my suspicions were confirmed. A boat darted out from the side of the river, and a tall cove with a long black beard came aboard. I heard him ask the mate whether they didn't need a mud-pilot to take them up in the reaches, but it seemed to me that he was a man who would know a deal more about handcuffs than he did about steering, so I kept away from him. He came across the deck, however, and made some remark to me, taking a good look at me the while. I don't like inquisitive people at any time, but an inquisitive stranger with glue about the roots of his beard is the worst of all to stand, especially under the circumstances. I began to feel that it was time for me to go.

I soon got a chance, and made good use of it. A big collier came athwart the bows of our steamer, and we had to slacken down to dead slow. There was a barge astern, and I slipped down by a rope and was into the barge before any one missed me. Of course I had to leave my luggage behind me, but I had the belt with the nuggets round my waist, and the chance of shaking the police off my track was worth more than a couple of boxes. It was clear to me now that the pilot had been a traitor, as well as the captain, and had set the

detectives after me. I often wish I could drop across those two men again.

I hung about the barge all day as she drifted down the stream. There was one man in her, but she was a big, ugly craft, and his hands were too full for much looking about. Toward evening, when it got a bit dusky, I struck out for the shore, and found myself in a sort of marsh place, a good many miles to the east of London. I was soaking wet and half dead with hunger, but I trudged into the town, got a new rig-out at a slop-shop, and after having some supper, engaged a bed at the quietest lodgings I could find.

I woke pretty early—a habit you pick up in the bush—and lucky for me that I did so. The very first thing I saw when I took a look through a chink in the shutter was one of these infernal policemen, standing right opposite and staring up at the windows. He hadn't epaulets nor a sword, like our traps, but for all that there was a sort of family likeness, and the same busybody expression. Whether they followed me all the time, or whether the woman that let me the bed didn't like the looks of me, is more than I have ever been able to find out. He came across as I was watching him, and noted down the address of the house in a book. I was afraid that he was going to ring at the bell, but I suppose his orders were simply to keep an eye on me, for after another good look at the windows he moved on down the street.

I saw that my only chance was to act at once. I threw on my clothes, opened the window softly,

and, after making sure that there was nobody about, dropped out onto the ground and made off as hard as I could run. I traveled a matter of two or three miles, when my wind gave out; and as I saw a big building with people going in and out, I went in too, and found that it was a railway station. A train was just going off for Dover to meet the French boat, so I took a ticket and jumped into a third-class carriage.

There were a couple of other chaps in the carriage, innocent-looking young beggars, both of them. They began speaking about this and that, while I sat quiet in the corner and listened. Then they started on England and foreign countries, and such like. Look ye now, doctor, this is a fact. One of them begins jawing about the justice of England's laws. "It's all fair and above-board," says he; "there ain't any secret police, nor spying, like they have abroad," and a lot more of the same sort of wash. Rather rough on me, wasn't it, listening to the damned young fool, with the police following me about like my shadow?

I got to Paris right enough, and there I changed some of my gold, and for a few days I imagined I'd shaken them off, and began to think of settling down for a bit of rest. I needed it by that time, for I was looking more like a ghost than a man. You've never had the police after you, I suppose? Well, you needn't look offended, I didn't mean any harm. If ever you had you'd know that it wastes a man away like a sheep with the rot.

I went to the opera one night and took a box, for

I was very flush. I was coming out between the acts when I met a fellow lounging along in the passage. The light fell on his face, and I saw that it was the mud-pilot that had boarded us in the Thames. His beard was gone, but I recognized the man at a glance, for I've a good memory for faces.

I tell you, doctor, I felt desperate for a moment. I could have knifed him if we had been alone, but he knew me well enough never to give me the chance. It was more than I could stand any longer, so I went right up to him and drew him aside, where we'd be free from all the loungers and theater-goers.

"How long are you going to keep it up?" I asked him.

He seemed a bit flustered for a moment, but then he saw there was no use beating about the bush, so he answered straight:

"Until you go back to Australia," he said.

"Don't you know," I said, "that I have served the government and got a free pardon?"

He grinned all over his ugly face when I said this.

"We know all about you, Maloney," he answered. "If you want a quiet life, just you go back where you came from. If you stay here, you're a marked man; and when you are found tripping it'll be a lifer for you, at the least. Free trade's a fine thing but the market's too full of men like you for us to need to import any."

It seemed to me that there was something in what he said, though he had a nasty way of putting it. For some days back I'd been feeling a sort of home sick. The ways of the people weren't my ways. They

stared at me in the street; and if I dropped into a bar, they'd stop talking and edge away a bit, as if I was a wild beast. I'd sooner have had a pint of old Stringybark, too, than a bucketful of their rot-gut liquors. There was too much damned propriety. What was the use of having money if you couldn't dress as you liked, nor bust in properly? There was no sympathy for a man if he shot about a little when he was half-over. I've seen a man dropped at Nelson many a time with less row than they'd make over a broken window-pane. The thing was slow, and I was sick of it.

"You want me to go back?" I said.

"I've my order to stick fast to you until you do," he answered.

"Well," I said, "I don't care if I do. All I bargain is that you keep your mouth shut and don't let on who I am, so that I may have a fair start when I get there."

He agreed to this, and we went over to Southampton the very next day, where he saw me safely off once more. I took a passage round to Adelaide, where no one was likely to know me; and there I settled, right under the nose of the police. I'd been there ever since, leading a quiet life,'but for little difficulties like the one I'm in for now, and for that devil, Tattooed Tom, of Hawkesbury. I don't know what made me tell you all this, doctor, unless it is that being lonely makes a man inclined to jaw when he gets a chance. Just you take warning from me, though. Never put yourself out to serve your country; for your country will do precious little for you.

Just you let them look after their own affairs; and if they find difficulty in hanging a set of scoundrels, never mind chipping in, but let them alone to do as best they can. Maybe they'll remember how they treated me after I'm dead, and be sorry for neglecting me. I was rude to you when you came in, and swore a trifle promiscuous: but don't you mind me, it's only my way. You'll allow, though, that I have cause to be a bit touchy now and again when I think of all that's passed. You're not going, are you? Well, if you must, you must; but I hope you will look me up at odd times when you are going your rounds. Oh, I say, you've left the balance of that cake of tobacco behind you, haven't you? No: it's in your pocket—that's all right. Thank ye doctor, you're a good sort, and as quick at a hint as any man I've met.

A couple of months after narrating his experiences, Wolf Tone Maloney finished his term, and was released. For a long time I neither saw him nor heard of him, and he had almost slipped from my memory, until I was reminded, in a somewhat tragic manner, of his existence. I had been attending a patient some distance off in the country, and was riding back, guiding my tired horse among the boulders which strewed the pathway, and endeavoring to see my way through the gathering darkness, when I came suddenly upon a little wayside inn. As I walked my horse up toward the door, intending to make sure of my bearings before proceeding further, I heard the sound of a violent altercation within the little bar. There seemed to be

a chorus of expostulation or remonstrance, above which two powerful voices rang out loud and angry. As I listened, there was a momentary hush, two pistol shots sounded almost simultaneously, and with a crash the door burst open and a pair of dark figures staggered out into the moonlight. They struggled for a moment in a deadly wrestle, and then went down together among the loose stones. I had sprung off my horse, and, with the help of half a dozen rough fellows from the bar, dragged them away from one another.

A glance was sufficient to convince me that one of them was dying fast. He was a thick-set burly fellow, with a determined cast of countenance. The blood was welling from a deep stab in his throat, and it was evident that an important artery had been divided. I turned away from him in despair, and walked over to where his antagonist was lying. He was shot through the lungs, but managed to raise himself up on his hand as I approached, and peered anxiously up into my face. To my surprise, I saw before me the haggard features and flaxen hair of my prison acquaintance, Maloney.

"Ah, doctor!" he said, recognizing me. "How is he? Will he die?"

He asked the question so earnestly that I imagined he had softened at the last moment, and feared to leave the world with another homicide upon his conscience. Truth, however, compelled me to shake my head mournfully, and to intimate that the wound would prove a mortal one.

Maloney gave a wild cry of triumph, which

brought the blood welling out from between his lips. "Here, boys," he gasped to the little group around him. "There's money in my inside pocket. Damn the expense! Drinks round. There's nothing mean about me. I'd drink with you, but I'm going. Give the doc my share, for he's as good—" Here his head fell back with a thud, his eye glazed, and the soul of Wolf Tone Maloney, forger, convict, ranger, murderer, and government peach, drifted away into the Great Unknown.

I cannot conclude without borrowing the account of the fatal quarrel which appeared in the columns of the *West Australian Sentinel.* The curious will find it in the issue of October 4, 1881:

"FATAL AFFRAY.—W. T. Maloney, a well-known citizen of New Montrose, and proprietor of the Yellow Boy gambling saloon, has met with his death under rather painful circumstances. Mr. Maloney was a man who had led a checkered existence, and whose past history is replete with interest. Some of our readers may recall the Lena Valley murders, in which he figured as the principal criminal. It is conjectured that during the seven months that he owned a bar in that region, from twenty to thirty travelers were hocussed and made away with. He succeeded, however, in evading the vigilance of the officers of the law, and allied himself with the bushrangers of Bluemansdyke, whose heroic capture and subsequent execution are matters of history. Maloney extricated himself from the fate

which awaited him by turning Queen's evidence. He afterward visited Europe, but returned to West Australia, where he has long played a prominent part in local matters. On Friday evening he encountered an old enemy, Thomas Grimthorpe, commonly known as Tattooed Tom, of Hawkesbury. Shots were exchanged, and both were badly wounded, only surviving a few minutes. Mr. Maloney had the reputation of being not only the most wholesale murderer that ever lived, but also of having a finish and attention to detail in matters of evidence which has been unapproached by any European criminal. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*"

THE SURGEON OF GASTER FELL.

CHAPTER I.

HOW THE WOMAN CAME TO KIRKBY-MALHOUSE.

BLEAK and wind-swept is the little town of Kirkby-Malhouse, and harsh and forbidding are the fells upon which it stands. It stretches in a single line of gray-stone, slate-roofed houses, dotted down the furze-clad slope of the long rolling moor. To the north and south stretch the swelling curves of the Yorkshire uplands, peeping over each other's backs to the skyland, with a tinge of yellow in the foreground, which shades away to olive in the distance, save where the long gray scars of rock protrude through the scanty and barren soil. From the little barren knoll above the church one may see to the westward a fringe of gold upon an arc of silver, where the great Morecambe sands are washed by the Irish Sea. To the east, Ingleborough looms purple in the distance; while Pennigent shoots up the tapering peak, whose great shadow, like Nature's own sun-dial, sweeps slowly around over a vast expanse of savage and sterile country.

In this lonely and secluded village, I, James Upperton, found myself in the summer of '85. Little as the hamlet had to offer, it contained that for which I yearned above all things—seclusion and freedom from all which might distract my mind from the high and weighty subjects which engaged it. I was weary of the long turmoil and profitless strivings of life. From early youth my days had been spent in wild adventure and strange experiences, until at the age of thirty-nine there were few lands upon which I had not set foot, and scarcely any joy or sorrow of which I had not tasted. Among the first of Europeans, I had penetrated to the desolate shores of Lake Tanganyika; I had twice made my way to those unvisited and impenetrable jungles which skirt the great table-land of Roraima. As a soldier of fortune I had served under many flags. I was with Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley; and I fought with Chanzy in the army of the Loire. It may well seem strange that, after a life so exciting, I could give myself up to the dull routine and trivial interests of the West Riding hamlet. And yet there are excitements of the mind to which mere bodily peril or the exaltation of travel is mean and commonplace. For years I had devoted myself to the study of the mystic and hermetic philosophies, Egyptian, Indian, Grecian and medieval, until out of the vast chaos there had dimly dawned upon me a huge symmetrical design; and I seemed to grasp the key of that symbolism which was used by those learned men to screen their precious knowledge from the vulgar and the wicked. Gnostics and Neo-platonists,

Chaldeans, Rosicrucians, and Indian Mystics, I saw and understood in which each played a part. To me the jargon of Paracelsus, the mysteries of the alchemists, and the visions of Swedenborg were all pregnant with meaning. I had deciphered the mysterious inscriptions of El Biram; and I knew the import of those strange characters which have been engraved by an unknown race upon the cliffs of Southern Turkestan. Immersed in these great and engrossing studies, I asked nothing from life save a garret for myself and for my books, where I might pursue my studies without interference or interruption.

But even in this little moorside village I found that it was impossible to shake off the censorship of one's fellow-mortals. When I went forth, the rustics would eye me askance, and mothers would whip up their children as I passed down the village street. At night I have glanced through my diamond-paned lattice to find that a group of foolish, staring peasants had been craning their necks in an ectasy of fear and curiosity to watch me at my solitary task. My landlady, too, became garrulous with a clatter of questions under every small pretext, and a hundred small ruses and wiles by which to tempt me to speak to her of myself and of my plans. All this was ill to bear; but when at last I heard that I was no longer to be sole lodger, and that a lady, a stranger, had engaged the other room, I felt that indeed it was time for one who sought the quiet and the peace of study to seek some more tranquil surrounding.

In my frequent walks I had learned to know well the wild and desolate region where Yorkshire borders on both Lancashire and Westmoreland. From Kirkby-Malhouse I had frequently made my way to this lonesome wilderness, and had traversed it from end to end. In the gloomy majesty of its scenery, and the appalling stillness and loneliness of its rock-strewn, melancholy solitudes, it seemed to offer me a secure asylum from espionage and criticism. As it chanced, I had in my rambles come upon an isolated dwelling in the very heart of these lonely moors, which I at once determined should be my own. It was a two-roomed cottage, which had once belonged to some shepherd, but which had long been deserted, and was crumbling rapidly to ruin. In the winter floods, the Gaster Beck, which runs down Gaster Fell, where the little shieling stood, had overswept its bank and torn away a portion of the wall. The roof, too, was in ill case, and the scattered slates lay thick amongst the grass. Yet the main shell of the house stood firm and true; and it was no great task for me to have all that was amiss set right. Though not rich, I could yet afford to carry out so modest a whim in a lordly way. There came slaters and masons from Kirby-Malhouse, and soon the lonely cottage upon Gaster Fell was as strong and weather-tight as ever.

The two rooms I laid out in a widely different manner—my own tastes are of a Spartan turn, and the outer chamber was so planned as to accord with them. An oil-stove by Rippingille of Birmingham furnished me with the means of cooking; while two

great bags, the one of flour, and the other of potatoes, made me independent of all supplies from without. In diet I had long been a Pythagorean, so that the scraggy long-limbed sheep which browsed upon the wiry grass by the Gaster Beck had little to fear from their new companion. A nine-gallon cask of oil served me as a sideboard; while a square table, a deal chair, and a truckle-bed completed the list of my domestic fittings. At the head of my couch hung two unpainted shelves—the lower for my dishes and cooking utensils, the upper for the few portraits which took me back to the little that was pleasant in the long, wearisome toiling for wealth and for pleasure which had marked the life I had left behind.

If this dwelling-room of mine were plain even to squalor, its poverty was more than atoned for by the luxury of the chamber which was destined to serve me as my study. I had ever held that it was best for the mind to be surrounded by such objects as would be in harmony with the studies which occupied it, and that the loftiest and most ethereal conditions of thought are only possible amid surroundings which please the eye and gratify the senses. The room which I had set apart for my mystic studies was set forth in a style as gloomy and majestic as the thoughts and aspirations with which it was to harmonize. Both walls and ceilings were covered with a paper of the richest and glossiest black, on which was traced a lurid and arabesque pattern of dead gold. A black velvet curtain covered the single diamond-paned window; while a thick, yielding carpet of the same material

prevented the sound of my own footfalls, as I paced backward and forward, from breaking the current of my thoughts. Along the cornices ran gold rods, from which depended six pictures, all of the somber and imaginative caste, which chimed best with my fancy. Two, as I remember, were from the brush of Fuseli; one from Noel Paton; one from Gustave Doré; two from Martin; with a little water-color by the incomparable Blake. From the center of the ceiling hung a single gold thread, so thin as to be scarce visible, but of great toughness. From this swung a dove of the same metal, with wings outstretched. The bird was hollow, and contained perfumed oil; while a sylph-like figure, curiously fashioned from pink crystal, hovered over the lamp, and imparted a soft and rich glow to the light. A brazen fireplace backed with malachite, two tiger skins upon the carpet, a buhl table, and two reclining chairs in amber plush and ebony, completed the furniture of my bijou study, save only that under the window stretched the long book-shelves, which contained the choicest works of those who have busied themselves with the mystery of life.

Boehme, Swedenborg, Damton, Berto, Lacci, Sinnett, Hardinge, Britten, Dunlop, Amberley, Winwood Read, Des Mousseaux, Alan Kardec, Lepsius, Sepher, Toldo, and the Abbé Dubois—these were some of those who stood marshaled between my oaken shelves. When the lamp was lighted of a night and the lurid, flickering light played over the somber and bizarre surroundings, the effect was all that I could wish. Nor was it lessened by the

howling of the wind as it swept over the melancholy waste around me. Here, at last, I thought, is a back-eddy in life's hurried stream, where I may lie in peace, forgetting and forgotten.

And yet it was destined that ere ever I reached this quiet harbor I should learn that I was still one of humankind, and that it is an ill thing to strive to break the bond which binds us to our fellows. It was but two nights before the date I had fixed upon for my change of dwelling, when I was conscious of a bustle in the house beneath, with the bearing of heavy burdens up the creaking stair, and the harsh voice of my landlady, loud in welcome and protestations of joy. From time to time, amid her whirl of words, I could hear a gentle and softly modulated voice, which struck pleasantly upon my ear after the long weeks during which I had listened only to the rude dialect of the dalesmen. For an hour I could hear the dialogue beneath—the high voice and the low, with clatter of cup and clink of spoon, until at last a light quick step passed my study door, and I knew that my new fellow-lodger had sought her room. Already my fears had been fulfilled, and my studies the worse for her coming. I vowed in my mind that the second sunset should find me installed, safe from all such petty influences, in my sanctuary at Gaster Fell.

On the morning after this incident I was up betimes, as is my wont; but I was surprised, on glancing from my window, to see that our new inmate was earlier still. She was walking down the narrow pathway which zigzags over the fell—a tall woman,

slender, her head sunk upon her breast, her arms filled with a bristle of wild flowers, which she had gathered in her morning rambles. The white and pink of her dress, and the touch of deep red ribbon in her broad drooping hat, formed a pleasant dash of color against the dun-tinted landscape. She was some distance off when I first set eyes upon her, yet I knew that this wandering woman could be none other than our arrival of last night, for there was a grace and refinement in her bearing which marked her from the dwellers of the fells. Even as I watched, she passed swiftly and lightly down the pathway, and turning through the wicket gate, at the further end of our cottage garden, she seated herself upon the green bank which faced my window, and strewing her flowers in front of her, set herself to arrange them.

As she sat there, with the rising sun at her back, and the glow of the morning spreading like an aureole around her stately and well-poised head, I could see that she was a woman of extraordinary personal beauty. Her face was Spanish rather than English in its type—oval, olive, with black sparkling eyes, and a sweetly sensitive mouth. From under the broad straw hat two thick coils of blue-black hair curved down on either side of her graceful, queenly neck. I was surprised, as I watched her, to see that her shoes and skirt bore witness to a journey rather than to a mere morning ramble. Her light dress was stained, wet, and bedraggled; while her boots were thick with the yellow soil of the fells. Her face, too, wore a weary expression,

and her young beauty seemed to be clouded over by the shadow of inward trouble. Even as I watched her, she burst suddenly into wild weeping, and throwing down her bundle of flowers, ran swiftly into the house.

Distrait as I was, and weary of the ways of the world, I was conscious of a sudden pang of sympathy and grief as I looked upon the spasm of despair which seemed to convulse this strange and beautiful woman. I bent to my books, and yet my thoughts would ever turn to her proud, clear-cut face, her weather-stained dress, her drooping head, and the sorrow which lay in each line and feature of her pensive face. Again and again I found myself standing at my casement, and glancing out to see if there were signs of her return. There on the green bank was the litter of golden gorse and purple marsh-mallow where she had left them; but through the whole morning I neither saw nor heard anything from her who had so suddenly aroused my curiosity and stirred my long-slumbering emotions.

Mrs. Adams, my landlady, was wont to carry up my frugal breakfast; yet it was very rarely that I allowed her to break the current of my thoughts, or to draw my mind by her idle chatter from weightier things. This morning, however, for once she found me in a listening mood, and with little prompting, proceeded to pour into my ears all that she knew of our beautiful visitor.

"Miss Eva Cameron be her name, sir," she said; "but who she be, or where she come fra, I know

little more than yoursel'. Maybe it was the same reason that brought her to Kirkby-Malhouse as fetched you there yoursel', sir."

"Possibly," said I, ignoring the covert question; "but I should hardly have thought that Kirkby-Malhouse was a place which offered any great attractions to a young lady."

"It's a gay place when the fair is on," said Mrs. Adams; "yet maybe it's just health and rest as the young lady is seeking."

"Very likely," said I, stirring my coffee; "and no doubt some friend of yours has advised her to seek them in your very comfortable apartments."

"Heh, sir!" she cried, "there's the wonder of it. The leddy has just come fra France; and how her folk came to learn of me is just a wonder. A week ago, up comes a man to my door—a fine man, sir, and a gentleman, as one could see with half an eye. 'You are Mrs. Adams,' says he. 'I engage your rooms for Miss Cameron,' says he. 'She will be here in a week,' says he; and then off without a word of terms. Last night there comes the young leddy hersel'—soft-spoken and downcast, with a touch of the French in her speech. But my sakes, sir! I must away and mak' her some tea, for she'll feel lonesome-like, poor lamb, when she wakes under a strange roof."

CHAPTER II.

HOW I WENT FORTH TO GASTER FELL.

I WAS still engaged upon my breakfast when I heard the clatter of dishes and the landlady's foot-fall as she passed toward her new lodger's room. An instant afterward she had rushed down the passage and burst in upon me with uplifted hand and startled eyes. "Lord 'a mercy, sir!" she cried, "and asking your pardon for troubling you, but I'm feared o' the young leddy, sir; she is not in her room."

"Why, there she is," said I, standing up and glancing through the casement. "She has gone back for the flowers she left upon the bank."

"Oh, sir, see to her boots and her dress!" cried the landlady, wildly. "I wish her mother was here, sir—I do. Where she has been is more than I ken, but her bed has not been lain on this night."

"She has felt restless, doubtless, and went for a walk, though the hour was certainly a strange one."

Mrs. Adams pursed her lip and shook her head. But even as she stood at the casement, the girl beneath looked smilingly up at her and beckoned to her with a merry gesture to open the window.

"Have you my tea there?" she asked in a rich, clear voice, with a touch of the mincing French accent.

"It is in your room, miss."

"Look at my boots, Mrs. Adams!" she cried,

thrusting them out from under her skirt. "These fells of yours are dreadful places—effroyable—one inch, two inch; never have I seen such mud! My dress, too—voilà!"

"Eh, miss, but you are in a pickle," cried the landlady, as she gazed down at the bedraggled gown. "But you must be main weary and heavy for sleep."

"No, no," she answered, laughing, "I care not for sleep. What is sleep? It is a little death—voilà tout. But for me to walk, to run, to breathe the air—that is to live. I was not tired, and so all night I have explored these fells of Yorkshire."

"Lord 'a mercy, miss, and where did you go?" asked Mrs. Adams.

She waved her hand round in a sweeping gesture which included the whole western horizon. "There," she cried. "O comme elles sont tristes et sauvages, ces collines! But I have flowers here. You will give me water, will you not? They will wither else." She gathered her treasures into her lap, and a moment later we heard her light, springy footfall upon the stair.

So she had been out all night, this strange woman. What motive could have taken her from her snug room on to the bleak, wind-swept hills? Could it be merely the restlessness, the love of adventure of a young girl? Or was there, possibly, some deeper meaning in this nocturnal journey?

I thought, as I paced my chamber, of her drooping head, the grief upon her face, and the wild burst of sobbing which I had overseen in the garden.

Her nightly mission, then, be it what it might, had left no thought of pleasure behind it. And yet, even as I walked, I could hear the merry tinkle of her laughter, and her voice upraised in protest against the motherly care wherewith Mrs. Adams insisted upon her changing her mud-stained garments. Deep as were the mysteries which my studies had taught me to solve, here was a human problem which for the moment at least was beyond my comprehension. I had walked out on the moor in the forenoon, and on my return, as I topped the brow that overlooks the little town, I saw my fellow-lodger some little distance off among the gorse. She had raised a light easel in front of her, and with papered board laid across it, was preparing to paint the magnificent landscape of rock and moor which stretched away in front of her. As I watched her I saw that she was looking anxiously to right and left. Close by me a pool of water had formed in a hollow. Dipping the cup of my pocket-flask into it, I carried it across to her. "This is what you need, I think," said I, raising my cap and smiling.

"Merci, bien!" she answered, pouring the water into her saucer, "I was indeed in search of some."

"Miss Cameron, I believe," said I. "I am your fellow-lodger. Upperton is my name. We must introduce ourselves in these wilds if we are not to be forever strangers."

"Oh, then, you live also with Mrs. Adams!" she cried. "I had thought that there were none but peasants in this strange place."

"I am a visitor, like yourself," I answered. "I

am a student, and have come for the quiet and repose which my studies demand."

"Quiet indeed!" said she, glancing round at the vast circle of silent moors, with the one tiny line of gray cottages which sloped down beneath us.

"And yet not quiet enough," I answered, laughing, "for I have been forced to move further into the fells for the absolute peace which I require."

"Have you, then, built a house upon the fells?" she asked, arching her eyebrows.

"I have, and hope within a few days to occupy it."

"Ah, but that is triste," she cried. "And where is it, then, this house which you have built?"

"It is over yonder," I answered. "See that stream which lies like a silver band upon the distant moor? It is the Gaster Beck, and it runs through Gaster Fell."

She started, and turned upon me her great dark, questioning eyes with a look in which surprise, incredulity, and something akin to horror seemed to be struggling for mastery.

"And you will live on the Gaster Fell?" she cried.

"So I have planned. But what do you know of Gaster Fell, Miss Cameron?" I asked. "I had thought that you were a stranger in these parts."

"Indeed, I have never been here before," she answered. "But I have heard my brother talk of these Yorkshire moors; and, if I mistake not, I have heard him name this very one as the wildest and most savage of them all."

"Very likely," said I, carelessly. "It is indeed a dreary place."

"Then why live there?" she cried, eagerly. "Consider the loneliness, the barrenness, the want of all comfort and of all aid, should aid be needed."

"Aid! What aid should be needed on Gaster Fell?"

She looked down and shrugged her shoulders. "Sickness may come in all places," said she. "If I were a man, I do not think I would live alone on Gaster Fell."

"I have braved worse dangers than that," said I, laughing; "but I fear that your picture will be spoiled, for the clouds are banking up, and already I feel a few rain-drops."

Indeed, it was high time we were on our way to shelter, for even as I spoke there came the sudden, steady swish of the shower. Laughing merrily, my companion threw her light shawl over her head, and, seizing picture and easel, ran with the lithe grace of a young fawn down the furze-clad slope, while I followed after with camp-stool and paint-box.

* * * * * *

Deeply as my curiosity had been aroused by this strange waif which had been cast up in our West Riding hamlet, I found that with fuller knowledge of her my interest was stimulated rather than satisfied. Thrown together as we were, with no thought in common with the good people who surrounded us, it was not long before a friendship and

confidence arose between us. Together we strolled over the moors in the mornings, or stood upon the Moorstone Crag to watch the red sun sinking beneath the distant waters of Morecambe. Of herself she spoke frankly and without reserve. Her mother had died young, and her youth had been spent in the Belgian convent from which she had just finally returned. Her father and one brother, she told me, constituted the whole of her family. Yet, when the talk chanced to turn upon the causes which had brought her to so lonely a dwelling, a strange reserve possessed her, and she would either relapse into silence or turn the talk into another channel. For the rest, she was an admirable companion—sympathetic, well read, with the quick, piquant daintiness of thought which she had brought with her from her foreign training. Yet the shadow which I had observed in her on the first morning that I had seen her was never far from her mind, and I have seen her merriest laugh frozen suddenly upon her lips, as though some dark thought lurked within her, to choke down the mirth and gaiety of her youth.

It was the eve of my departure from Kirkby-Malhouse that we sat upon the green bank in the garden, she with dark, dreamy eyes looking sadly out over the somber fells; while I, with a book upon my knee, glanced covertly at her lovely profile, and marveling to myself how twenty years of life could have stamped so sad and wistful an expression upon it.

"You have read much?" I remarked at last.

"Women have opportunities now such as their mothers never knew. Have you ever thought of going further—or seeking a course of college or even a learned profession?"

She smiled wearily at the thought.

"I have no aim, no ambition," she said. "My future is black—confused—a chaos. My life is like to one of these paths upon the fells. You have seen them, Monsieur Upperton. They are smooth and straight and clear where they begin; but soon they wind to left and wind to right, and so mid rocks and over crags until they lose themselves in some quagmire. At Brussels my path was straight; but now, *mon Dieu!* who is there can tell me where it leads?"

"It might take no prophet to do that, Miss Cameron," quoth I, with the fatherly manner which two score years may show toward one. "If I may read your life, I would venture to say that you were destined to fulfil the lot of women—to make some good man happy, and to shed around, in some wider circle, the pleasure which your society has given me since first I knew you."

"I will never marry," said she, with a sharp decision, which surprised and somewhat amused me.

"Not marry—and why?"

A strange look passed over her sensitive features, and she plucked nervously at the grass on the bank beside her.

"I dare not," said she in a voice that quivered with emotion.

"Dare not?"

"It is not for me. I have other things to do. That path of which I spoke is one which I must tread alone."

"But this is morbid," said I. "Why should your lot, Miss Cameron, be separate from that of my own sisters, or the thousand other young ladies whom every season brings out into the world? But perhaps it is that you have a fear and distrust of mankind. Marriage brings a risk as well as a happiness."

"The risk would be with the man who married me," she cried. And then in an instant, as though she had said too much, she sprung to her feet and drew her mantle round her. "The night air is chill, Mr. Upperton," said she, and so swept swiftly away, leaving me to muse over the strange words which had fallen from her lips.

I had feared that this woman's coming might draw me from my studies, but never had I anticipated that my thoughts and interests could have been changed in so short a time. I sat late that night in my little study, pondering over my future course. She was young, she was fair, she was alluring, both from her own beauty and from the strange mystery that surrounded her. And yet what was she, that she should turn me from the high studies that filled my mind, or change me from the line of life which I had marked out for myself? I was no boy, that I should be swayed and shaken by a dark eye or a woman's smile, and yet three days had passed and my work lay where I had left it. Clearly, it was time that I should

go. I set my teeth and vowed that another day should not have passed before I should have snapped this newly formed tie, and sought the lonely retreat which awaited me upon the moors. Breakfast was hardly over in the morning before a peasant dragged up to the door the rude hand-cart which was to convey my few personal belongings to my new dwelling. My fellow-lodger had kept her room; and steeled as my mind was against her influence, I was yet conscious of a little throb of disappointment that she should allow me to depart without a word of farewell. My hand-cart with its load of books had already started, and I, having shaken hands with Mrs. Adams, was about to follow it, when there was a quick scurry of feet on the stair, and there she was beside me all panting with her own haste.

"Then you go—you really go?" said she.

"My studies call me."

"And to Gaster Fell?" she asked.

"Yes; to the cottage which I have built there."

"And you will live alone there?"

"With my hundred companions who lie in that cart."

"Ah, books!" she cried, with a pretty shrug of her graceful shoulders. "But you will make me a promise?"

"What is it?" I asked, in surprise.

"It is a small thing. You will not refuse me?"

"You have but to ask it."

She bent forward her beautiful face with an expression of the most intense earnestness. 'You

will bolt your door at night?" said she; and was gone ere I could say a word in answer to her extraordinary request.

It was a strange thing for me to find myself at last duly installed in my lonely dwelling. For me, now, the horizon was bounded by the barren circle of wiry, unprofitable grass, patched over with furze bushes and scarred by the profusion of Nature's gaunt and granite ribs. A duller, wearier waste I have never seen; but its dulness was its very charm. What was there in the faded, rolling hills, or in the blue, silent arch of heaven to distract my thoughts from the high thoughts which engrossed them? I had left the drove of mankind, and had wandered away, for better or worse, upon a side path of my own. With them I had hoped to leave grief, disappointment, and emotion, and all other petty human weaknesses. To live for knowledge, and knowledge alone, that was the highest aim which life could offer. And yet upon the very first night which I spent at Gaster Fell there came a strange incident to lead my thoughts back once more to the world which I had left behind me.

It had been a sullen and sultry evening, with great livid cloud-banks mustering in the west. As the night wore on, the air within my little cabin became closer and more oppressive. A weight seemed to rest upon my brow and my chest. From far away the low rumble of thunder came moaning over the moor. Unable to sleep, I dressed, and standing at my cottage door, looked on the black solitude which surrounded me. There was no breeze

below; but above, the clouds were sweeping majestically across the sky, with half a moon peeping at times between the rifts. The ripple of the Gaster Beck and the dull hooting of a distant owl were the only sounds which broke upon my ear. Taking the narrow sheep-path which ran by the stream, I strolled along it for some hundred yards, and had turned to retrace my steps, when the moon was finally buried beneath an ink-black cloud, and the darkness deepened so suddenly that I could see neither the path at my feet, the stream upon my right, nor the rocks upon my left. I was standing groping about in the thick gloom, when there came a crash of thunder with a flash of lightning which lighted up the whole vast fell, so that every bush and rock stood out clear and hard in the livid light. It was but for an instant, and yet that momentary view struck a thrill of fear and astonishment through me, for in my very path, not twenty yards before me, there stood a woman, the livid light beating upon her face and showing up every detail of her dress and features. There was no mistaking those dark eyes, that tall, graceful figure. It was she—Eva Cameron, the woman whom I thought I had forever left. For an instant I stood petrified, marveling whether this could indeed be she, or whether it was some figment conjured up by my excited brain. Then I ran swiftly forward in the direction where I had seen her, calling loudly upon her, but without reply. Again I called, and again no answer came back, save the melancholy wail of the owl. A second flash illuminated the landscape, and the moon burst out from

behind its cloud. But I could not, though I climbed upon a knoll which overlooked the whole moor, see any sign of this strange midnight wanderer. For an hour or more I traversed the fell, and at last found myself back at my little cabin, still uncertain as to whether it had been a woman or a shadow upon which I gazed.

For the three days which followed this midnight storm, I bent myself doggedly to my work. From early morn till late at night I immured myself in my little study, with my whole thoughts buried in my books and my parchments. At last it seemed to me that I had reached that haven of rest, that oasis of study for which I had so often sighed. But, alas! for my hopes and my plannings! Within a week of my flight from Kirkby-Malhouse a strange and most unforeseen series of events not only broke in upon the calm of my existence, but filled me with emotions so acute as to drive all other considerations from my mind.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE GRAY COTTAGE IN THE GLEN.

It was either on the fourth or the fifth day after I had taken possession of my cottage that I was astonished to hear footsteps upon the grass outside, quickly followed by a crack, as from a stick, upon the door. The explosion of an infernal machine would hardly have surprised or discomfited me more.

I had hoped to have shaken off all intrusion forever, yet here was somebody beating at my door with as little ceremony as if it had been a village ale-house. Hot with anger, I flung down my book, withdrew the bolt just as my visitor had raised his stick to renew his rough application for admittance. He was a tall, powerful man, tawny-bearded and deep-chested, clad in a loose-fitting suit of tweed, cut for comfort rather than elegance. As he stood in the shimmering sunlight, I took in every feature of his face. The large, fleshy nose; the steady blue eyes, with their thick thatch of overhanging brows; the broad forehead, all knitted and lined with furrows, which were strangely at variance with his youthful bearing. In spite of his weather-stained felt hat, and the colored handkerchief slung round his muscular brown neck, I could see at a glance he was a man of breeding and education. I had been prepared for some wandering shepherd or uncouth tramp, but this apparition fairly disconcerted me.

"You look astonished, said he, with a smile. "Did you think, then, that you were the only man in the world with a taste for solitude? You see that there are other hermits in the wilderness besides yourself."

"Do you mean to say that you live here?" I asked in no conciliatory voice.

"Up yonder," he answered, tossing his head backward. "I thought as we were neighbors, Mr. Upperton, that I could not do less than look in and see if I could assist you in any way."

"Thank you," said I, coldly, standing with my

hand upon the latch of the door. "I am a man of simple tastes, and you can do nothing for me. You have the advantage of me in knowing my name."

He appeared to be chilled by my ungracious manner.

"I learned it from the masons who were at work here," he said. "As for me, I am a surgeon, the surgeon of Gaster Fell. That is the name I have gone by in these parts, and it serves as well as another."

"Not much room for practise here?" I observed.

"Not a soul except yourself for miles on either side."

"You appear to have had need of some assistance yourself?" I remarked, glancing at a broad white splash, as from the recent action of some powerful acid, upon his sunburnt cheek.

"That is nothing," he answered, curtly, turning his face half round to hide the mark. "I must get back, for I have a companion who is waiting for me. If I can ever do anything for you, pray let me know. You have only to follow the beck upward for a mile or so to find my place. Have you a bolt on the inside of your door?"

"Yes," I answered, rather startled at this question.

"Keep it bolted, then," he said. "The fell is a strange place. You never know who may be about. It is as well to be on the safe side. Good-by." He raised his hat, turned on his heel, and lounged away along the bank of the little stream.

I was still standing with my hand upon the latch,

gazing after my unexpected visitor, when I became aware of yet another dweller in the wilderness. Some distance along the path which the stranger was taking there lay a great gray boulder, and leaning against this was a small, wizened man, who stood erect as the other approached, and advanced to meet him. The two talked for a minute or more, the taller man nodding his head frequently in my direction, as though describing what had passed between us. Then they walked on together, and disappeared in a dip of the fell. Presently I saw them ascending once more some rising ground further on. My acquaintance had thrown his arm round his elderly friend, either from affection or from a desire to aid him up the steep incline. The square, burly figure and its shriveled, meager companion stood out against the sky-line, and, turning their faces, they looked back at me. At the sight, I slammed the door, lest they should be encouraged to return. But when I peeped from the window some minutes afterward, I perceived that they were gone.

For the remainder of that day I strove in vain to recover that indifference to the world and its ways which is essential to mental abstraction. Do what I would, my thoughts ran upon the solitary surgeon and his shriveled companion. What did he mean by his question as to my bolt? and how came it that the last words of Eva Cameron were to the same sinister effect. Again and again I speculated as to what train of causes could have led two men so dissimilar in age and appearance to dwell together on

the wild, inhospitable fells. Were they, like myself, immersed in some engrossing study? or could it be that a companionship in crime had forced them from the haunts of men? Some cause there must be, and that a potent one, to induce the man of education to turn to such an existence. It was only now that I began to realize that the crowd of the city is infinitely less disturbing than the unit of the country.

All day I bent over the Egyptian papyrus upon which I was engaged; but neither the subtile reasonings of the ancient philosopher of Memphis, nor the mystic meaning which lay in his pages, could raise my mind from the things of earth. Evening was drawing in before I threw my work aside in despair. My heart was bitter against this man for his intrusion. Standing by the beck which purled past the door of my cabin, I cooled my heated brow, and thought the matter over. Clearly it was the small mystery hanging over these neighbors of mine which had caused my mind to run so persistently on them. That cleared up, they would no longer cause an obstacle to my studies. What was to hinder me, then, from walking in the direction of their dwelling, and observing for myself, without permitting them to suspect my presence, what manner of men they might be? Doubtless, their mode of life would be found to admit of some simple and prosaic explanation. In any case, the evening was fine, and a walk would be bracing for mind and body. Lighting my pipe, I set off over the moors in the direction which they had taken. The sun lay low and red in the west, flushing the heather

with a deeper pink, and mottling the broad heaven with every hue, from the palest green at the zenith, to the richest crimson along the fair horizon. It might have been the great palette upon which the world-painter had mixed his primeval colors. On either side, the giant peaks of Ingleborough and Pennigent looked down upon the gray, melancholy country which stretches between them. As I advanced, the rude fells ranged themselves upon right and left, forming a well-defined valley, down the center of which meandered the little brooklet. On either side, parallel lines of gray rock marked the level of some ancient glacier, the moraine of which had formed the broken ground about my dwelling. Ragged boulders, precipitous scarps, and twisted, fantastic rocks, all bore witness to the terrible power of the old ice-field, and showed where its frosty fingers had ripped and rent the solid limestones.

About half-way down this wild glen there stood a small clump of gnarled and stunted oak-trees. From behind these, a thin dark column of smoke rose into the still evening air. Clearly this marked the position of my neighbor's house. Trending away to the left, I was able to gain the shelter of a line of rocks, and so reach a spot from which I could command a view of the building without exposing myself to any risk of being observed. It was a small, slate-covered cottage, hardly larger than the boulders among which it lay. Like my own cabin, it showed signs of having been constructed for the use of some shepherd; but, unlike

mine, no pains had been taken by the tenants to improve and enlarge it. Two little peeping windows, a cracked and weather-beaten door, and a discolored barrel for catching the rain-water, were the only external objects from which I might draw deductions as to the dwellers within. Yet even in these there was food for thought; for as I drew nearer, still concealing myself behind the ridge, I saw that thick bars of iron covered the windows, while the old door was slashed and plated with the same metal. These strange precautions, together with the wild surroundings and unbroken solitude, gave an indescribably ill omen and fearsome character to the solitary building. Thrusting my pipe into my pocket, I crawled upon my hands and knees through the gorse and ferns until I was within a hundred yards of my neighbor's door. There, finding that I could not approach nearer without fear of detection, I crouched down, and set myself to watch.

I had hardly settled into my hiding-place, when the door of the cottage swung open, and the man who had introduced himself to me as the surgeon of Gaster Fell came out, bareheaded, with a spade in his hands. In front of the door there was a small cultivated patch containing potatoes, pease, and other forms of green stuff, and here he proceeded to busy himself, trimming, weeding, and arranging, singing the while in a powerful though not very musical voice. He was all engrossed in his work, with his back to the cottage, when there emerged from the half-open door the same attenuated creature whom I had seen in the morning. I could perceive now

that he was a man of sixty, wrinkled, bent, and feeble, with sparse, grizzled hair, and long, colorless face. With a cringing, sidelong gait, he shuffled toward his companion, who was unconscious of his approach until he was close upon him. His light footfall or his breathing may have finally given notice of his proximity, for the worker sprung round and faced him. Each made a quick step toward the other, as though in greeting, and then—even now I feel the horror of the instant—the tall man rushed upon and knocked his companion to the earth, then whipping up his body, ran with great speed over the intervening ground and disappeared with his burden into the house.

Case-hardened as I was by my varied life, the suddenness and violence of the thing made me shudder. The man's age, his feeble frame, his humble and deprecating manner, all cried shame against the deed. So hot was my anger, that I was on the point of striding up to the cabin, unarmed as I was, when the sound of voices from within showed me that the victim had recovered. The sun had sunk beneath the horizon, and all was gray, save a red feather in the cap of Pennigent. Secure in the failing light, I approached near and strained my ears to catch what was passing. I could hear the high, querulous voice of the elder man, and the deep, rough monotone of his assailant, mixed with a strange metallic jangling and clanking. Presently the surgeon came out, locking the door behind him, and stamped up and down in the twilight, pulling at his hair and brandishing his arms, like a man demented. Then he set off,

walking rapidly up the valley, and I soon lost sight of him among the rocks. When the sound of his feet had died away in the distance, I drew nearer to the cottage. The prisoner within was still pouring forth a stream of words, and moaning from time to time like a man in pain. These words resolved themselves, as I approached, into prayers—shrill, voluble prayers, pattered forth with the intense earnestness of one who sees impending an imminent danger. There was to me something inexpressibly awesome in this gush of solemn entreaty from the lonely sufferer, meant for no human ear, and jarring upon the silence of the night. I was still pondering whether I should mix myself in the affair or not, when I heard in the distance the sound of the surgeon's returning footfall. At that I drew myself up quickly by the iron bars and glanced in through the diamond-paned window. The interior of the cottage was lighted up by a lurid glow, coming from what I afterward discovered to be a chemical furnace. By its rich light I could distinguish a great litter of retorts, test-tubes, and condensers, which sparkled over the table, and threw strange, grotesque shadows on the wall. On the further side of the room was a wooden frame-work resembling a hencoop, and in this, still absorbed in prayer, knelt the man whose voice I heard. The red glow beating upon his upturned face made it stand out from the shadow like a painting from Rembrandt, showing up every wrinkle upon the parchment-like skin. I had but time for a fleeting glance; then dropping from the window I made

off through the rocks and the heather, nor slackened my pace until I found myself back in my cabin once more. There I threw myself upon my couch, more disturbed and shaken than I had ever thought to feel again.

Long into the watches of the night I tossed and tumbled on my uneasy pillow. A strange theory had framed itself within me, suggested by the elaborate scientific apparatus which I had seen. Could it be that this surgeon had some profound and unholy experiments on hand, which necessitated the taking, or at least the tampering with the life of his companion? Such a supposition would account for the loneliness of his life; but how could I reconcile it with the close friendship which had appeared to exist between the pair no longer ago than that very morning? Was it grief or madness which had made the man tear his hair and wring his hands when he emerged from the cabin? And sweet Eva Cameron, was she also a partner to this somber business? Was it to my grim neighbors that she made her strange nocturnal journeys? and if so, what bond could there be to unite so strangely assorted a trio? Try as I might, I could come to no satisfactory conclusion upon these points. When at last I dropped into a troubled slumber, it was only to see once more in my dreams the strange episodes of the evening, and to wake at dawn unrefreshed and weary.

Such doubts as I might have had as to whether I had indeed seen my former fellow-lodger upon the night of the thunder-storm, were finally resolved

that morning. Strolling along down the path which led to the fell, I saw in one spot where the ground was soft the impressions of a foot—the small, dainty foot of a well-booted woman. That tiny heel and high instep could have belonged to none other than my companion of Kirkby-Malhouse. I followed her trail for some distance till it lost itself among hard and stony ground; but it still pointed, as far as I could discern it, to the lonely and ill-omened cottage. What power could there be to draw this tender girl, through wind and rain and darkness, across the fearsome moors to that strange rendezvous?

But why should I let my mind run upon such things? Had I not prided myself that I lived a life of my own, beyond the sphere of my fellow-mortals? Were all my plans and my resolutions to be shaken because the ways of my neighbors were strange to me? It was unworthy, it was puerile. By constant and unremitting effort, I set myself to cast out these distracting influences, and to return to my former calm. It was no easy task. But after some days, during which I never stirred from my cottage, I had almost succeeded in regaining my peace of mind, when a fresh incident whirled my thoughts back into their old channel.

I have said that a little beck flowed down the valley and past my very door. A week or so after the doings which I have described, I was seated by my window, when I perceived something white drifting slowly down the stream. My first thought was that it was a drowning sheep; but picking up

my stick, I strolled to the bank and hooked it ashore. On examination it proved to be a large sheet, torn and tattered, with the initials J. C. in the corner. What gave it its sinister significance, however, was that from hem to hem it was all dabbled and discolored with blood. In parts where the water had soaked it, this was but a discoloration; while in others the stains showed they were of recent origin. I shuddered as I gazed at it. It could but have come from the lonely cottage in the glen. What dark and violent deed had left this gruesome trace behind it? I had flattered myself that the human family was as nothing to me, and yet my whole being was absorbed now in curiosity and resentment. How could I remain neutral when such things were doing within a mile of me? I felt that the old Adam was too strong in me, and that I *must* solve this mystery. Shutting the door of my cabin behind me, I set off up the glen in the direction of the surgeon's cabin. I had not gone far before I perceived the very man himself. He was walking rapidly along the hill-side, beating the furze bushes with a cudgel and bellowing like a madman. Indeed, at the sight of him, the doubts as to his sanity which had arisen in my mind were strengthened and confirmed. As he approached, I noticed that his left arm was suspended in a sling. On perceiving me, he stood irresolute, as though uncertain whether to come over to me or not. I had no desire for an interview with him, however; so I hurried past him, on which he continued on his way, still shouting and striking about with his club. When he had

disappeared over the fells, I made my way down to his cottage, determined to find some clew to what had occurred. I was surprised, on reaching it, to find the iron-plated door flung wide open. The ground immediately outside it was marked with the signs of a struggle. The chemical apparatus within and the furniture were all dashed about and shattered. Most suggestive of all, the sinister wooden cage was stained with blood-marks, and its unfortunate occupant had disappeared. My heart was heavy for the little man, for I was assured I should never see him in this world more. There were many gray cairns of stones scattered over the valley. I ran my eye over them, and wondered which of them concealed the traces of this last act which ended the long tragedy.

There was nothing in the cabin to throw any light upon the identity of my neighbors. The room was stuffed with chemicals and delicate philosophical instruments. In one corner, a small book-case contained a choice selection of works of science. In another was a pile of geological specimens collected from the limestone. My eye ran rapidly over these details; but I had no time to make a more thorough examination, for I feared lest the surgeon should return and find me there. Leaving the cottage, I hastened homeward with a weight at my heart. A nameless shadow hung over the lonely gorge—the heavy shadow of unexpiated crime, making the grim fells look grimmer, and the wild moors more dreary and forbidding. My mind wavered whether I should send to Lancaster to ac-

quaint the police of what I had seen. My thoughts recoiled at the prospect of becoming a witness in a *cause célèbre*, and having an overbusy counsel or an officious press peeping and prying into my own modes of life. Was it for this I had stolen away from my fellow-mortals and settled in these lonely wilds? The thought of publicity was repugnant to me. It was best, perhaps, to wait and watch without taking any decided step until I had come to a more definite conclusion as to what I had heard.

I caught no glimpse of the surgeon upon my homeward journey; but when I reached my cottage, I was astonished and indignant to find that somebody had entered it in my absence. Boxes had been pulled out from under the bed, the curtains disarranged, the chairs drawn out from the wall. Even my study had not been safe from this rough intruder, for the prints of a heavy boot were plainly visible on the ebony-black carpet. I am not a patient man at the best of times; but this invasion and systematic examination of my household effects stirred up every drop of gall in my composition. Swearing under my breath, I took my old cavalry saber down from its nail and passed my finger along the edge. There was a great notch in the center where it had jarred up against the collar-bone of a Bavarian artilleryman the day we beat Van Der Tann back from Orleans. It was still sharp enough, however, to be serviceable. I placed it at the head of my bed, within reach of my arm, ready to give a keen greeting to the next uninvited visitor who might arrive.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE MAN WHO CAME IN THE NIGHT.

The night set in gusty and tempestuous, and the moon was all girt with ragged clouds. The wind blew in melancholy gusts, sobbing and sighing over the moor, and setting all the gorse-bushes a-groaning. From time to time a little sputter of rain pattered up against the window-pane. I sat until near midnight glancing over the fragment on immortality by Iamblichus, the Alexandrian platonist, of whom the Emperor Julian said that he was posterior to Plato in time, but not in genius. At last, shutting up my book, I opened my door and took a last look at the dreary fell and still more dreary sky. As I protruded my head, a swoop of wind caught me, and sent the red ashes of my pipe sparkling and dancing through the darkness. At the same moment the moon shone brilliantly out from between two clouds, and I saw, sitting on the hill-side, not two hundred yards from my door, the man who called himself the surgeon of Gaster Fell. He was squatted among the heather, his elbows upon his knees, and his chin resting upon his hands, as motionless as a stone, with his gaze fixed steadily upon the door of my dwelling.

At the sight of this ill-omened sentinel, a chill of horror and of fear shot through me, for his gloomy and mysterious associations had cast a glamour round the man, and the hour and place were in keep-

ing with his sinister presence. In a moment, however, a manly glow of resentment and self-confidence drove this pretty emotion from my mind, and I strode fearlessly in his direction. He rose as I approached, and faced me, with the moon shining on his grave, bearded face and glittering on his eyeballs. "What is the meaning of this?" I cried, as I came upon him. "What right have you to play the spy on me?"

I could see the flush of anger rise on his face. "Your stay in the country has made you forget your manners," he said. "The moor is free to all."

"You will say next that my house is free to all," I said, hotly. "You have had the impertinence to ransack it in my absence this afternoon."

He started, and his features showed the most intense excitement. "I swear to you that I had no hand in it," he cried. "I have never set foot in your house in my life. Oh, sir, sir, if you will but believe me, there is a danger hanging over you, and you would do well to be careful."

"I have had enough of you," I said. "I saw the cowardly blow you struck when you thought no human eye rested upon you. I have been to your cottage, too, and know all that it has to tell. If there is a law in England, you shall hang for what you have done. As to me, I am an old soldier, sir, and I am armed. I shall not fasten my door. But if you or any other villain attempt to cross my threshold, it shall be at your own risk." With these words I swung round upon my heel and strode into my cabin. When I looked back at him from

the door he was still looking at me, a gloomy figure among the heather, with his head sunk low upon his breast. I slept fitfully all that night; but I heard no more of this strange sentinel without, nor was he to be seen when I looked out in the morning.

For two days the wind freshened and increased with constant squalls of rain, until on the third night the most furious storm was raging which I can ever recollect in England. The thunder roared and rattled overhead, while the incessant lightning flashes illuminated the heavens. The wind blew intermittently, now sobbing away into a calm, and then, of a sudden, beating and howling at my window-panes until the glasses rattled in their frames. The air was charged with electricity, and its peculiar influence, combined with the strange episodes with which I had been recently connected, made me morbidly wakeful and acutely sensitive. I felt that it was useless to go to bed, nor could I concentrate my mind sufficiently to read a book. I turned my lamp half down to moderate the glare, and leaning back in my chair, I gave myself up to reverie. I must have lost all perception of time, for I have no recollection how long I sat there on the border-land betwixt thought and slumber. At last, about three or possibly, four o'clock, I came to myself with a start —not only came to myself, but with every sense and nerve upon the strain. Looking round my chamber in the dim light, I could not see anything to justify my sudden trepidation. The homely room the rain-blurred window, and the rude wooden door were all as they had been. I had begun to persuade

myself that some half-formed dream had sent that vague thrill through my nerves, when in a moment I became conscious of what it was. It was a sound —the sound of a human step outside my solitary cottage.

Amid the thunder and the rain and the wind, I could hear it—a dull, stealthy footfall, now on the grass, now on the stones—occasionally stopping entirely, then resumed, and ever drawing nearer. I sat breathlessly, listening to the eerie sound. It had stopped now at my very door, and was replaced by a panting and gasping, as of one who has traveled fast and far. Only the thickness of the door separated me from this hard-breathing, light-treading night-walker. I am no coward ; but the wildness of the night, and the vague warning which I had had, and the proximity of this strange visitor, so unnerved me that my mouth was too dry for speech. I stretched out my hand, however, and grasped my saber, with my eyes still bent upon the door. I prayed in my heart that the thing, whatever it might be, would but knock or threaten or hail me, or give any clew as to its character. Any known danger was better than this awful silence, broken only by the rhythmic panting.

By the flickering light of the expiring lamp I could see that the latch of my door was twitching, as though a gentle pressure was exerted on it from without. Slowly, slowly, it rose, until it was free of the catch, and then there was a pause of a quarter minute or more, while I still sat silent, with dilated eyes and drawn saber. Then, very slowly,

the door began to revolve upon its hinges, and the keen air of the night came whistling through the slit. Very cautiously it was pushed open, so that never a sound came from the rusty hinges. As the aperture enlarged, I became aware of a dark, shadowy figure upon my threshold, and of a pale face that looked in at me. The features were human, but the eyes were not. They seemed to burn through the darkness with a greenish brilliancy of their own; and in their baleful, shifty glare I was conscious of the very spirit of murder. Springing from my chair, I had raised my naked sword, when, with a wild shouting, a second figure dashed up to my door. At its approach my shadowy visitant uttered a shrill cry, and fled away across the fells, yelping like a beaten hound. The two creatures were swallowed up in the tempest from which they had emerged as if they were the very genii of the beating wind and the howling rain.

Tingling with my recent fear, I stood at my door, peering through the night with the discordant cry of the fugitives still ringing in my ears. At that moment a vivid flash of lightning illuminated the whole landscape and made it as clear as day. By its light I saw far away upon the hill-side two dark figures pursuing each other with extreme rapidity across the fells. Even at that distance the contrast between them forbid all doubt as to their identity. The first was the small, elderly man whom I had supposed to be dead; the second was my neighbor, the surgeon. For an instant they stood out clear and hard in the unearthly light; in the next, the

darkness had closed over them, and they were gone. As I turned to re-enter my chamber, my foot rattled against something on my threshold. Stooping, I found it was a straight knife, fashioned entirely of lead, and so soft and brittle that it was a strange choice for a weapon. To render it more harmless, the top had been cut square off. The edge, however, had been assiduously sharpened against a stone, as was evident from the markings upon it, so that it was still a dangerous implement in the grasp of a determined man. It had evidently dropped from the fellow's hand at the moment when the sudden coming of the surgeon had driven him to flight. There could no longer be a doubt as to the object of his visit.

And what was the meaning of it all? you ask. Many a drama which I have come across in my wandering life, some as strange and as striking as this one, has lacked the ultimate explanation which you demand. Fate is a grand weaver of tales; but she ends them, as a rule, in defiance of all artistic laws, and with an unbecoming want of regard for literary propriety. As it happens, however, I have a letter before me as I write which I may add without comment, and which will clear all that may remain dark.

"KIRKBY LUNATIC ASYLUM,
"*Sept.* 4, 1885.

"SIR,—I am deeply conscious that some apology and explanation is due to you for the very startling and, in your eyes, mysterious events which have

recently occurred, and which have so seriously interfered with the retired existence which you desire to lead. I should have called upon you on the morning after the recapture of my father; but my knowledge of your dislike to visitors, and also of —you will excuse my saying it—your very violent temper, led me to think that it was better to communicate with you by letter. On the occasion of our last interview I should have told you what I tell you now; but your allusions to some crime of which you considered me guilty, and your abrupt departure, prevented me from saying much that was on my lips.

"My poor father was a hard-working general practitioner in Birmingham, where his name is still remembered and respected. About ten years ago he began to show signs of mental aberration, which we were inclined to put down to overwork and the effects of a sunstroke. Feeling my own incompetence to pronounce upon a case of such importance, I at once sought the highest advice in Birmingham and London. Among others we consulted the eminent alienist, Mr. Fraser Brown, who pronounced my father's case to be intermittent in its nature, but dangerous during the paroxysms. 'It may take a homicidal, or it may take a religious turn,' he said; 'or it may prove to be a mixture of both. For months he may be as well as you or me, and then in a moment he may break out. You will incur a great responsibility if you leave him without supervision.'

"The result showed the justice of the specialist's

diagnosis. My poor father's disease rapidly assumed both a religious and homicidal turn, the attacks coming on without warning after months of sanity. It would weary you were I to describe the terrible experiences which his family have undergone. Suffice it that, by the blessing of God, we have succeeded in keeping his poor crazed fingers clear of blood. My sister Eva I sent to Brussels, and I devoted myself entirely to his case. He has an intense dread of madhouses; and in his sane intervals would beg and pray so piteously not to be condemned to one, that I could never find the heart to resist him. At last, however, his attacks became so acute and dangerous that I determined, for the sake of those about me, to remove him from the town to the loneliest neighborhood that I could find. This proved to be Gaster Fell; and there he and I set up house together.

"I had a sufficient competence to keep me, and being devoted to chemistry, I was able to pass the time with a fair degree of comfort and profit. He, poor fellow, was as submissive as a child, when in his right mind; and a better, kinder companion no man could wish for. We constructed together a wooden compartment, into which he could retire when the fit was upon him; and I had arranged the window and door so that I could confine him to the house if I thought an attack was impending. Looking back, I can safely say that no possible precaution was neglected; even the necessary table utensils were leaden and pointless, to prevent his doing mischief with them in his frenzy.

"For months after our change of quarters he appeared to improve. Whether it was the bracing air, or the absence of any incentive to violence, he never showed during that time any signs of his terrible disorder. Your arrival first upset his mental equilibrium. The very sight of you in the distance awoke all those morbid impulses which had been sleeping. That very evening he approached me stealthily with a stone in his hand, and would have slain me, had I not, as the lesser of two evils, struck him to the ground and thrust him into his cage before he had time to regain his senses. This sudden relapse naturally plunged me into the deepest sorrow. For two days I did all that lay in my power to soothe him. On the third day he appeared to be calmer; but, alas! it was but the cunning of the madman. He had contrived to loosen two bars of his cage; and when thrown off my guard by his apparent improvement—I was engrossed in my chemistry—he suddenly sprung out at me, knife in hand. In the scuffle, he cut me across the forearm, and escaped from the hut before I recovered myself, nor could I find out which direction he had taken. My wound was a trifle, and for several days I wandered over the fells, beating through every clump of bushes in my fruitless search. I was convinced that he would make an attempt on your life, a conviction that was strengthened when I heard that some one in your absence had entered your cottage. I therefore kept a watch over you at night. A dead sheep which I found upon the moor, terribly mangled, showed me that he was not without food, and that

the homicidal impulse was still strong in him. At last, as I had expected, he made his attempt upon you, which, but for my intervention, would have ended in the death of one or other of you. He ran, and struggled like a wild animal; but I was as desperate as he, and succeeded in bringing him down and conveying him to the cottage. Convinced by this failure that all hope of permanent improvement was gone, I brought him next morning to this establishment, and he is now, I am glad to say, returning to his senses.

"Allow me once more, sir, to express my sorrow that you should have been subjected to this ordeal, and believe me to be faithfully yours,

JOHN LIGHT CAMERON.

"P. S.—My sister Eva bids me send you her kind regards. She told me how you were thrown together at Kirkby-Malhouse, and also that you met one night upon the fells. You will understand from what I have already told you that when my dear sister came back from Brussels I did not dare to bring her home, but preferred that she should lodge in safety in the village. Even then I did not venture to bring her into the presence of her father, and it was only at night, when he was asleep, that we could plan a meeting."

And this was the story of this strange group whose path through life had crossed my own. From that last terrible night I have neither seen nor heard of any of them, save for this one letter which I have

transcribed. Still I dwell on Gaster Fell, and still my mind is buried in the secrets of the past. But when I wander forth upon the moor, and when I see the deserted little gray cottage among the rocks, my mind is still turned to the strange drama, and to the singular couple who broke in upon my solitude.

CYPRIAN OVERBECK WELLS.

A LITERARY MOSAIC.

From my boyhood I have had an intense and overwhelming conviction that my real vocation lay in the direction of literature. I have, however, had a most unaccountable difficulty in getting any responsible person to share my views. It is true that private friends have sometimes, after listening to my effusions, gone the length of remarking, "Really, Smith, that's not half bad!" or, "You take my advice, old boy, and send that to some magazine!" but I have never on these occasions had the moral courage to inform my adviser that the article in question had been sent to wellnigh every publisher in London, and had come back again with a rapidity and precision which spoke well for the efficiency of our postal arrangements.

Had my manuscripts been paper boomerangs, they could not have returned with greater accuracy to their unhappy despatcher. Oh, the vileness and utter degradation of the moment when the stale little cylinder of closely written pages, which seemed so fresh and full of promise a few days ago, is handed in by a remorseless postman! And what moral depravity shines through the editor's ridiculous plea of "want

of space!" But the subject is a painful one, and a digression from the plain statement of fact which I originally contemplated.

From the age of seventeen to that of three-and-twenty I was a literary volcano in a constant state of eruption. Poems and tales, articles and reviews, nothing came amiss to my pen. From the great sea-serpent to the nebular hypothesis, I was ready to write on anything or everything, and I can safely say that I seldom handled a subject without throwing new lights upon it. Poetry and romance, however, had always the greatest attractions for me. How I have wept over the pathos of my heroines, and laughed at the comicalities of my buffoons! Alas! I could find no one to join me in my appreciation, and solitary admiration for one's self, however genuine, becomes satiating after a time. My father remonstrated with me, too, on the score of expense and loss of time, so that I was finally compelled to relinquish my dreams of literary independence and to become a clerk in a wholesale mercantile firm connected with the West African trade.

Even when condemned to the prosaic duties which fell to my lot in the office, I continued faithful to my first love. I have introduced pieces of word-painting into the most commonplace business letters which have, I am told, considerably astonished the recipients. My refined sarcasm has made defaulting creditors writhe and wince. Occasionally, like the great Silas Wegg, I would drop into poetry, and

so raise the whole tone of the correspondence. Thus what could be more elegant than my rendering of the firm's instructions to the captain of one of their vessels. It ran in this way:

> "From England, captain, you must steer a
> Course directly to Madeira,
> Land the casks of salted beef,
> Then away to Teneriffe.
> Pray be careful, cool, and wary
> With the merchants of Canary.
> When you leave them make the most
> Of the trade winds to the coast.
> Down it you shall sail as far
> As the land of Calabar,
> And from there you'll onward go
> To Bonny and Fernando Po"—

and so on for four pages. The captain, instead of treasuring up this little gem, called at the office next day and demanded with quite unnecessary warmth what the thing meant, and I was compelled to translate it all back into prose. On this, as on other similar occasions, my employer took me severely to task—for he was, you see, a man entirely devoid of all pretensions to literary taste!

All this, however, is a mere preamble, and leads up to the fact that after ten years or so of drudgery I inherited a legacy which, though small, was sufficient to satisfy my simple wants. Finding myself independent, I rented a quiet house removed from the uproar and bustle of London, and there I settled down with the intention of producing some great work

which should single me out from the family of the Smiths, and render my name immortal. To this end I laid in several quires of foolscap, a box of quill pens, and a sixpenny bottle of ink, and having given my housekeeper injunctions to deny me to all visitors, I proceeded to look round for a suitable subject.

I was looking round for some weeks. At the end of that time I found that I had by constant nibbling devoured a large number of the quills, and had spread the ink out to such advantage, with blots, spills, and abortive commencements, that there appeared to be some everywhere except in the bottle. As to the story itself, however, the facility of my youth had deserted me completely, and my mind remained a complete blank; nor could I, do what I would, excite my sterile imagination to conjure up a single incident or character.

In this strait, I determined to devote my leisure to running rapidly through the works of the leading English novelists, from Daniel Defoe to the present day, in the hope of stimulating my latent ideas and of getting a good grasp of the general tendency of literature. For some time past I had avoided opening any work of fiction because one of the greatest faults of my youth had been that I invariably and unconsciously mimicked the style of the last author whom I had happened to read. Now, however, I made up my mind to seek safety in a multitude, and by consulting *all* the English classics to avoid the danger of imitating any one too closely. I had just accom-

plished the task of reading through the majority of the standard novels at the time when my narrative commences.

It was, then, about twenty minutes to ten on the night of the fourth of June, eighteen hundred and eighty-six, that, after disposing of a pint of beer and a Welsh rarebit for my supper, I seated myself in my arm-chair, cocked my feet upon a stool, and lighted my pipe, as was my custom. Both my pulse and my temperature were, as far as I know, normal at the time. I would give the state of the barometer, but that unlucky instrument had experienced an unprecedented fall of forty-two inches—from a nail to the ground—and was not in a reliable condition. We live in a scientific age, and I flatter myself that I move with the times.

While in that comfortable lethargic condition which accompanies both digestion and poisoning by nicotine, I suddenly became aware of the extraordinary fact that my little drawing-room had elongated into a great *salon,* and that my humble table had increased in proportion. Round this colossal mahogany were seated a great number of people who were talking earnestly together, and the surface in front of them was strewn with books and pamphlets. I could not help observing that these persons were dressed in a most extraordinary mixture of costumes, for those at the end nearest to me wore peruke wigs, swords, and all the fashions of two centuries back; those about the centre had tight knee-breeches, high cravats, and

heavy bunches of seals; while among those at the far side the majority were dressed in the most modern style, and among them I saw, to my surprise, several eminent men of letters whom I had the honor of knowing. There were two or three women in the company. I should have risen to my feet to greet these unexpected guests, but all power of motion appeared to have deserted me, and I could only lie still and listen to their conversation, which I soon perceived to be all about myself.

"Egad!" exclaimed a rough, weather-beaten man, who was smoking a long churchwarden pipe at my end of the table, "my heart softens for him. Why, gossips, we've been in the same straits ourselves. Gadzooks! never did mother feel more concern for her eldest born than I when Rory Random went out to make his own way in the world."

"Right, Tobias, right!" cried another man, seated at my very elbow. "By my troth! I lost more flesh over poor Robin on his island than had I the sweating sickness twice told. The tale was wellnigh done when in swaggers my Lord of Rochester—a merry gallant, and one whose word in matters literary might make or mar. 'How now, Defoe,' quoth he, 'hast a tale on hand?' 'Even so, your lordship,' I returned. 'A right merry one, I trust,' quoth he. 'Discourse unto me concerning thy heroine, a comely lass, Dan, or I mistake.' 'Nay,' I replied, 'there is no heroine in the matter.' 'Split not your phrases,' quoth he; 'thou weighest every word like a scald attorney. Speak to

me of thy principal female character, be she heroine or no.' 'My lord,' I answered, 'there is no female character.' 'Then out upon thyself, and thy book, too!' he cried. 'Thou hadst best burn it!'—and so out in great dudgeon, while I fell to mourning over my poor romance, which was thus, as it were, sentenced to death before its birth. Yet there are a thousand now who have read of Robin and his man Friday to one who has heard of my Lord of Rochester."

"Very true, Defoe," said a genial-looking man in a red waistcoat, who was sitting at the modern end of the table. "But all this won't help our good friend Smith in making a start at his story, which, I believe, was the reason why we assembled."

"The Dickens it is!" stammered a little man beside him, and everybody laughed, especially the genial man, who cried out, "Charley Lamb, Charley Lamb, you'll never alter. You would make a pun if you were hanged for it."

"That would be a case of haltering," returned the other, on which everybody laughed again.

By this time I had begun to dimly realize in my confused brain the enormous honor which had been done me. The greatest masters of fiction in every age of English letters had apparently made a rendezvous beneath my roof, in order to assist me in my difficulties. There were many faces at the table whom I was unable to identify; but when I looked hard at others I often found them to be very familiar to me, whether from paintings or from mere description.

Thus, between the first two speakers, who had betrayed themselves as Defoe and Smollett, there sat a dark, saturnine, corpulent old man, with harsh, prominent features, who I was sure could be none other than the famous author of Gulliver. There were several others of whom I was not so sure, sitting at the other side of the table, but I conjecture that both Fielding and Richardson were among them, and I could swear to the lantern-jaws and cadaverous visage of Laurence Sterne. Higher up I could see among the crowd the high forehead of Sir Walter Scott, the masculine features of George Eliot and the flattened nose of Thackeray; while among the living I recognized James Payn, Walter Besant, the lady known as "Ouida," Robert Louis Stevenson, and several of lesser note. Never before, probably, had such an assemblage of choice spirits gathered under one roof.

"Well," said Sir Walter Scott, speaking with a very pronounced accent, "ye ken the auld proverb, sirs, 'Ower mony cooks,' or as the Border minstrel sang:

> "'Black Johnstone wi' his troopers ten
> Might mak' the heart turn cauld,
> But Johnstone when he's a' alane
> Is waur ten thoosand fauld.'

The Johnstones were one of the Redesdale families, second cousins of the Armstrongs, and connected by marriage to—"

"Perhaps, Sir Walter," interrupted Thackeray,

"you would take the responsibility off our hands by yourself dictating the commencement of a story to this young literary aspirant."

"Na, na!" cried Sir Walter; 'I'll do my share, but there's Charlie over there as full o' wut as a Radical's full o' treason. He's the laddie to give a cheery opening to it."

Dickens was shaking his head, and apparently about to refuse the honor, when a voice from among the moderns—I could not see who it was for the crowd—said:

"Suppose we begin at the end of the table and work round, any one contributing a little as the fancy seizes him?"

"Agreed! agreed!" cried the whole company; and every eye was turned on Defoe, who seemed very uneasy, and filled his pipe from a great tobacco-box in front of him.

"Nay, gossips," he said, "there are others more worthy—" But he was interrupted by loud cries of "No, no!" from the whole table; and Smollett shouted out, "Stand to it, Dan—stand to it! You and I and the Dean here will make three short tacks just to fetch her out of harbor, and then she may drift where she pleases." Thus encouraged, Defoe cleared his throat, and began in this way, talking between the puffs of his pipe:

"My father was a well-to-do yeoman of Cheshire, named Cyprian Overbeck, but, marrying about the year 1617, he assumed the name of his wife's family,

which was Wells; and thus I, their eldest son, was named Cyprian Overbeck Wells. The farm was a very fertile one, and contained some of the best grazing land in those parts, so that my father was enabled to lay by money to the extent of a thousand crowns, which he had laid out in an adventure to the Indies with such surprising success that in less than three years it had increased fourfold. Thus encouraged, he bought a part share of the trader, and, fitting her out once more with such commodities as were most in demand (viz., old muskets, hangers, and axes, besides glasses, needles and the like), he placed me on board as supercargo to look after his interests, and despatched us upon our voyage.

"We had a fair wind as far as Cape de Verde, and there, getting into the northwest trade-winds, made good progress down the African coast. Beyond sighting a Barbary rover once, whereat our mariners were in sad distress, counting themselves already as little better than slaves, we had good luck until we had come within a hundred leagues of the Cape of Good Hope, when the wind veered round to the southward and blew exceeding hard, while the sea rose to such a height that the end of the mainyard dipped into the water, and I heard the master say that though he had been at sea for five-and-thirty years he had never seen the like of it, and that he had little expectation of riding through it. On this I fell to wringing my hands and bewailing myself, until the mast going by the board with a crash, I thought that the ship had

struck, and swooned with terror, falling into the scuppers and lying like one dead, which was the saving of me, as will appear in the sequel. For the mariners, giving up all hope of saving the ship, and being in momentary expectation that she would founder, pushed off in the long-boat, whereby I fear that they met the fate which they hoped to avoid, since I have never from that day heard anything of them. For my own part, on recovering from the swoon into which I had fallen, I found that, by the mercy of Providence, the sea had gone down, and that I was alone in the vessel. At which last discovery I was so terror-struck that I could but stand wringing my hands and bewailing my sad fate, until at last taking heart, I fell to comparing my lot with that of my unhappy camarados, on which I became more cheerful, and descending to the cabin, made a meal off such dainties as were in the captain's locker."

Having got so far, Defoe remarked that he thought he had given them a fair start, and handed over the story to Dean Swift, who, after premising that he feared he would find himself as much at sea as Master Cyprian Overbeck Wells, continued in this way:

"For two days I drifted about in great distress, fearing that there should be a return of the gale, and keeping an eager lookout for my late companions. Upon the third day, toward evening, I observed to my extreme surprise that the ship was under the influence of a very powerful current, which ran to the north-

east with such violence that she was carried, now bows on, now stern on, and occasionally drifting sideways like a crab, at a rate which I can not compute at less than twelve or fifteen knots an hour. For several weeks I was borne away in this manner, until one morning, to my inexpressible joy, I sighted an island upon the starboard quarter. The current would, however, have carried me past it had I not made shift, though single-handed, to set the flying-jib so as to turn her bows, and then clapping on the sprit-sail, studding-sail, and fore-sail, I clewed up the halyards upon the port side, and put the wheel down hard a-starboard, the wind being at the time north-east-half-east."

At the description of this nautical manœuvre I observed that Smollett grinned, and a gentleman who was sitting higher up the table in the uniform of the Royal Navy, and who I guessed to be Captain Marryat, became very uneasy and fidgeted in his seat.

"By this means I got clear of the current and was able to steer within a quarter of a mile of the beach, which indeed I might have approached still nearer by making another tack, but being an excellent swimmer, I deemed it best to leave the vessel, which was almost waterlogged, and to make the best of my way to the shore.

"I had had no doubts hitherto as to whether this new-found country was inhabited or no, but as I approached nearer to it, being on the summit of a great wave, I perceived a number of figures on the beach,

engaged apparently in watching me and my vessel. My joy, however, was considerably lessened when on reaching the land I found that the figures consisted of a vast concourse of animals of various sorts who were standing about in groups, and who hurried down to the water's edge to meet me. I had scarce put my foot upon the sand before I was surrounded by an eager crowd of deer, dogs, wild boars, buffaloes, and other creatures, none of whom showed the least fear either of me or of each other, but, on the contrary, were animated by a common feeling of curiosity, as well as, it would appear, by some degree of disgust."

"A second edition," whispered Laurence Sterne to his neighbor; "Gulliver served up cold."

"Did you speak, sir?" asked the dean, very sternly, having evidently overheard the remark.

"My words were not addressed to you, sir," answered Sterne, looking rather frightened.

"They were none the less insolent," roared the dean. "Your reverence would fain make a Sentimental Journal of the narrative, I doubt not, and find pathos in a dead donkey—though faith, no man can blame thee for mourning over thy own kith and kin."

"Better that than to wallow in all the filth of Yahooland," returned Sterne, warmly; and a quarrel would certainly have ensued but for the interposition of the remainder of the company. As it was, the dean refused indignantly to have any further

hand in the story, and Sterne also stood out of it, remarking with a sneer that he was loth to fit a good blade on to a poor handle. Under these circumstances some further unpleasantness might have occurred, had not Smollett rapidly taken up the narrative, continuing it in the third person instead of the first:

"Our hero, being considerably alarmed at this strange reception, lost little time in plunging into the sea again and regaining his vessel, being convinced that the worst which might befall him from the elements would be as nothing compared to the dangers of this mysterious island. It was as well that he took this course, for before nightfall his ship was overhauled and he himself picked up by a British man-of-war, the *Lightning* (74), then returning from the West Indies, where it had formed part of the fleet under the command of Admiral Benbow. Young Wells, being a likely lad enough, well spoken and high spirited, was at once entered on the books as officers' servant, in which capacity he both gained great popularity on account of the freedom of his manners, and found an opportunity for indulging in those practical pleasantries for which he had all his life been famous.

"Among the quartermasters of the *Lightning* there was one named Jedediah Anchorstock, whose appearance was so remarkable that it quickly attracted the attention of our hero. He was a man of about fifty, dark with exposure to the weather, and so tall that

as he came along the 'tween decks he had to benr himself nearly double. The most striking peculiarity of this individual was, however, that in his boyhood some evil-minded person had tattooed eyes all over his countenance with such marvelous skill that it was difficult at a short distance to pick out his real ones among so many counterfeits. On this strange personage Master Cyprian determined to exercise his talents for mischief, the more so as he learned that he was extremely superstitious, and also that he had left behind him in Portsmouth a strong-minded spouse of whom he stood in mortal terror. With this object he secured one of the sheep which were kept on board for the officers' table, and pouring a can of rumbo down its throat, reduced it to a state of utter intoxication. He then conveyed it to Anchorstock's berth, and with the assistance of some other imps, as mischievous as himself, dressed it up in a high nightcap and gown, and covered it over with the bedclothes.

"When the quartermaster came down from his watch, our hero met him at the door of his berth with an agitated face. 'Mr. Anchorstock,' said he, 'can it be that your wife is on board?' 'Wife!' roared the astonished sailor. 'Ye white-faced swab, what d'ye mean?' 'If she's not here in the ship it must be her ghost,' said Cyprian, shaking his head gloomily. 'In the ship! How in thunder could she get into the ship? Why, master, I believe as how you're weak in the upper works, d'ye see, to as much

as think o' such a thing. My Poll is moored head and starn, behind the point at Portsmouth, more'n two thousand miles away.' 'Upon my word,' said our hero, very earnestly, 'I saw a female look out of your cabin not five minutes ago.' 'Ay, ay, Mr. Anchorstock,' joined in several of the conspirators. 'We all saw her—a spanking-looking craft with a deadlight mounted on one side,' 'Sure enough,' said Anchorstock, staggered by this accumulation of evidence, 'my Poll's starboard eye was doused forever by long Sue Williams of the Hard. But if so be as she be there, I must see her, be she ghost or quick;' with which the honest sailor, in much perturbation and trembling in every limb, began to shuffle forward into the cabin, holding the light well in front of him. It chanced, however, that the unhappy sheep, which was quietly engaged in sleeping off the effects of its unusual potations, was awakened by the noise of his approach, and finding herself in such an unusual position, sprang out of the bed and rushed furiously for the door, bleating wildly, and rolling about like a brig in a tornado, partly from intoxication and partly from the night-dress which impeded its movements. As Anchorstock saw this extraordinary apparition bearing down upon him, he uttered a yell and fell flat upon his face, convinced that he had to do with a supernatural visitor, the more so as the confederates heightened the effect by a chorus of most ghastly groans and cries. The joke had nearly gone beyond what was originally intended, for the quarter-

master lay as one dead, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that he could be brought to his senses. To the end of the voyage he stoutly asserted that he had seen the distant Mrs. Anchorstock, remarking with many oaths that though he was too woundily scared to make much note of the features, there was no mistaking the strong smell of rum which was characteristic of his better half.

"It chanced shortly after this to be the king's birthday, an event which was signalized aboard the *Lightning* by the death of the commander under singular circumstances. This officer, who was a real fair-weather Jack, hardly knowing the ship's keel from her ensign, had obtained his position through parliamentary interest, and used it with such tyranny and cruelty that he was universally execrated. So unpopular was he that when a plot was entered into by the whole crew to punish his misdeeds with death, he had not a single friend among six hundred souls to warn him of his danger. It was the custom on board the king's ships that upon his birthday the entire ship's company should be drawn up on deck, and that at a signal they should discharge their muskets into the air in honor of his majesty. On this occasion word had been secretly passed round for every man to slip a slug into his firelock, instead of the blank cartridge provided. On the boatswain blowing his whistle, the men mustered upon deck and formed line, while the captain, standing well in front of them, delivered a few words to them. 'When I give the word,'

he concluded, 'you shall discharge your pieces, and by thunder, if any man is a second before or a second after his fellows, I shall trice him up to the weather rigging!' With these words he roared 'Fire!' on which every man leveled his musket straight at his head and pulled the trigger. So accurate was the aim and so short the distance, that more than five hundred bullets struck him simultaneously, blowing away his head and a large portion of his body. There were so many concerned in this matter, and it was so hopeless to trace it to any individual, that the officers were unable to punish any one for the affair—the more readily as the captain's haughty ways and heartless conduct had made him quite as hateful to them as to the men whom they commanded.

"By his pleasantries and the natural charm of his manner, our hero so far won the good wishes of the ship's company that they parted with infinite regret upon their arrival in England. Filial duty, however, urged him to return home and report himself to his father, with which object he posted from Portsmouth to London, intending to proceed thence to Shropshire. As it chanced, however, one of the horses sprained his off foreleg while passing through Chichester, and as no change could be obtained, Cyprian found himself compelled to put up at the Crown and Bull for the night.

"Ods bodikins!" continued Smollett, laughing, "I never could pass a comfortable hostel without stopping, and so, with your permission, I'll e'en stop here,

and whoever wills may lead friend Cyprian to his further adventures. Do you, Sir Walter, give us a touch of the Wizard of the North."

With these words Smollett produced a pipe, and filling it at Defoe's tobacco-pot, waited patiently for the continuation of the story.

"If I must, I must," remarked the illustrious Scotchman, taking a pinch of snuff; "but I must beg leave to put Mr. Wells back a few hundred years, for of all things, I love the true mediæval smack. To proceed then:

"Our hero, being anxious to continue his journey, and learning that it would be some time before any conveyance would be ready, determined to push on alone, mounted on his gallant gray steed. Traveling was particularly dangerous at that time, for besides the usual perils which beset wayfarers, the southern parts of England were in a lawless and disturbed state which bordered on insurrection. The young man, however, having loosened his sword in his sheath, so as to be ready for every eventuality, galloped cheerily upon his way, guiding himself to the best of his ability by the light of the rising moon.

"He had not gone far before he realized that the cautions which had been impressed upon him by the landlord, and which he had been inclined to look upon as self-interested advice, were only too well justified. At a spot where the road was particularly rough, and ran across some marsh land, he perceived a short distance from him a dark shadow, which his practiced

eye detected at once as a body of crouching men. Reining up his horse within a few yards of the ambuscade, he wrapped his cloak round his bridle-arm and summoned the party to stand forth.

"'What ho, my masters!' he cried. 'Are beds so scarce, then, that ye must hamper the high-road of the king with your bodies? Now, by St. Ursula of Alpuxerra, there be those who might think that birds who fly o' nights were after higher game than the moorhen or the woodcock!'

"'Blades and targets, comrades!' exclaimed a tall, powerful man, springing into the centre of the road with several companions, and standing in front of the frightened horse. 'Who is this swashbuckler who summons his majesty's lieges from their repose? A very soldado, o' truth. Hark ye, sir, or my lord, or thy grace, or whatsoever title your honor's honor may be pleased to approve, thou must curb thy tongue play, or by the seven witches of Gambleside thou may find thyself in but a sorry plight.'

"'I prithee, then, that thou wilt expound to me who and what ye are,' quoth our hero, 'and whether your purpose be such as an honest man may approve of. As to your threats, they turn from my mind as your caitiffy weapons would shiver upon my hauberk from Milan.'

"'Nay, Allen,' interrupted one of the party, addressing him who seemed to be their leader; 'this is a lad of mettle, and such a one as our honest Jack longs for. But we lure not hawks with empty hands.

Look ye, sir, there is game afoot which it may need such bold hunters as thyself to follow. Come with us and take a firkin of canary, and we will find better work for that glaive of thine than getting its owner into broil and bloodshed; for, by my troth! Milan or no Milan, if my curtel axe do but ring against that morion of thine it will be an ill day for thy father's son.'

"For a moment our hero hesitated as to whether it would best become his knightly traditions to hurl himself against his enemies, or whether it might not be better to obey their requests. Prudence, mingled with a large share of curiosity, eventually carried the day, and dismounting from his horse, he intimated that he was ready to follow his captors.

" 'Spoken like a man!' cried he whom they addressed as Allen. 'Jack Cade will be right glad of such a recruit. Blood and carrion! but thou hast the thews of a young ox; and I swear, by the haft of my sword, that it might have gone ill with some of us hadst thou not listened to reason!'

" 'Nay, not so, good Allen—not so,' squeaked a very small man, who had remained in the background while there was any prospect of a fray, but who now came pushing to the front. 'Hadst thou been alone it might indeed have been so, perchance, but an expert swordsman can disarm at pleasure such a one as this young knight. Well I remember in the Palatinate how I clove to the chin even such another —the Baron von Slogstaff. He struck at me, look

ye, so; but I, with buckler and blade, did, as one might say, deflect it, and then, countering in carte, I returned in tierce, and so— St. Agnes save us! who comes here?'

"The apparition which frightened the loquacious little man was sufficiently strange to cause a qualm even in the bosom of the knight. Through the darkness there loomed a figure which appeared to be of gigantic size, and a hoarse voice, issuing apparently some distance above the heads of the party, broke roughly on the silence of the night.

" 'Now out upon thee, Thomas Allen, and foul be thy fate if thou hast abandoned thy post without good and sufficient cause. By St. Anselm of the Holy Grove! thou hadst best have never been born than rouse my spleen this night. Wherefore is it that you and your men are trailing over the moor like a flock of geese when Michaelmas is near?'

" 'Good captain,' said Allen, doffing his bonnet, an example followed by others of the band, 'we have captured a goodly youth who was pricking it along the London road. Methought that some word of thanks were meet reward for such service, rather than taunt or threat.'

" 'Nay, take it not to heart, bold Allen,' exclaimed their leader, who was none other than the great Jack Cade himself. 'Thou knowest of old that my temper is somewhat choleric, and my tongue not greased with that unguent which oils the mouths of the lip-serving lords of the land. And you,' he continued, turning

suddenly upon our hero, 'are you ready to join the great cause which will make England what it was when the learned Alfred reigned in the land? Zounds, man, speak out, and pick not your phrases.'

"'I am ready to do aught which may become a knight and a gentleman,' said the soldier, stoutly.

"'Taxes shall be swept away!' cried Cade, excitedly—the impost and the anpost—the tithe and the hundred-tax. The poor man's salt-box and flour-bin shall be as free as the nobleman's cellar. Ha! what sayest thou?'

"'It is but just,' said our hero.

"'Ay, but they give us such justice as the falcon gives the leveret!' roared the orator. 'Down with them, I say—down with every man of them! Noble and judge, priest and king, down with them all.'"

"'Nay,' said Sir Overbeck Wells, drawing himself up to his full height, and laying his hand upon the hilt of his sword, 'there I can not follow thee, but must rather defy thee as traitor and faineant, seeing that thou art no true man, but one who would usurp the rights of our master the king, whom may the Virgin protect!'"

"At these bold words, and the defiance which they conveyed, the rebels seemed for a moment utterly bewildered; but, encouraged by the hoarse shout of their leader, they brandished their weapons and prepared to fall upon the knight, who placed himself in a posture for defence and awaited their attack.

"There now!" cried Sir Walter, rubbing his hands

and chuckling, "I've put the chiel in a pretty warm corner, and we'll see which of you moderns can take him oot o't. Ne'er a word more will ye get frae me to help him one way or the other."

"You try your hand, James," cried several voices; and the author in question had got so far as to make an allusion to a solitary horseman who was approaching, when he was interrupted by a tall gentleman a little further down with a slight stutter and a very nervous manner.

"Excuse me," he said, "but I fancy that I may be able to do something here. Some of my humble productions have been said to excel Sir Walter at his best, and I was undoubtedly stronger all round. I could picture modern society as well as ancient; and as to my plays, why, Shakespeare never came near 'The Lady of Lyons' for popularity. There is this little thing—" (Here he rummaged among a great pile of papers in front of him). "Ah! that's a report of mine, when I was in India. Here it is. No, this is one of my speeches in the House and this is my criticism on Tennyson. Didn't I warm him up? I can't find what I wanted, but of course you have read them all—'Rienzi,' and 'Harold,' and 'The Last of the Barons.' Every schoolboy knows them by heart, as poor Macaulay would have said. Allow me to give you a sample:

"In spite of the gallant knight's valiant resistance, the combat was too unequal to be sustained. His sword was broken by a slash from a brown bill, and

he was borne to the ground. He expected immediate death, but such did not seem to be the intention of the ruffians who had captured him. He was placed upon the back of his own charger, and borne, bound hand and foot, over the trackless moor, into the fastnesses where the rebels secreted themselves.

"In the depths of these wilds there stood a stone building which had once been a farm-house, but having been for some reason abandoned, had fallen into ruin, and had now become the headquarters of Cade and his men. A large cow-house near the farm had been utilized as sleeping quarters, and some rough attempts had been made to shield the principal room of the main building from the weather by stopping up the gaping apertures in the walls. In this apartment was spread out a rough meal for the returning rebels, and our hero was thrown, still bound, into an empty out-house, there to await his fate."

Sir Walter had been listening with the greatest impatience to Bulwer Lytton's narrative, but when it had reached this point, he broke in impatiently:

"We want a touch of your own style, man," he said. "The animal-magnetico-electro-hysterical-biological-mysterious sort of story is all your own, but at present you are just a poor copy of myself, and nothing more."

There was a murmur of assent from the company, and Defoe remarked: "Truly, Master Lytton, there is a plaguy resemblance in the style, which may indeed be but a chance, and yet methinks it is suffi-

ciently marked to warrant such words as our friend hath used."

"Perhaps you will think that this is an imitation also," said Lytton, bitterly; and leaning back in his chair with a morose countenance, he continued the narrative in this way:

"Our unfortunate hero had hardly stretched himself upon the straw with which his dungeon was littered, when a secret door opened in the wall and a venerable old man swept majestically into the apartment. The prisoner gazed upon him with astonishment not unmixed with awe, for on his broad brow was printed the seal of much knowledge—such knowledge as it is not granted to the son of man to know. He was clad in a long white robe, crossed and checkered with mystic devices in the Arabic character, while a high scarlet tiara, marked with the square and circle, enhanced his venerable appearance. 'My son,' he said, turning his piercing and yet dreamy gaze upon Sir Overbeck, 'all things lead to nothing, and nothing is the foundation of all things. Cosmos is impenetrable. Why, then, should we exist?'

"Astounded at this weighty query, and at the philosophic demeanor of his visitor, our hero made shift to bid him welcome and to demand his name and quality. As the old man answered him, his voice rose and fell in musical cadences, like the sighing of the east wind, while an ethereal and aromatic vapor pervaded the apartment.

"'I am the eternal non-ego,' he answered. 'I

am the concentrated negative—the everlasting essence of nothing. You see in me that which existed before the beginning of matter many years before the commencement of time. I am the algebraic x which represents the infinite divisibility of a finite particle.'

"Sir Overbeck felt a shudder as though an ice-cold hand had been placed upon his brow. 'What is your message?' he whispered, falling prostrate before his mysterious visitor.

" 'To tell you that the eternities beget chaos and that the immensities are at the mercy of the divine ananke. Infinitude crouches before a personality. The mercurial essence is the prime mover in spirituality, and the thinker is powerless before the pulsating inanity. The cosmical procession is terminated only by the unknowable and unpronounceable—'

"May I ask, Mr. Smollett, what you find to laugh at?"

"Gadzooks! master," cried Smollett, who had been sniggering for some time back. "It seems to me that there is little danger of any one venturing to dispute that style with you."

"It's all your own," murmured Sir Walter.

"And very pretty, too," quoth Laurence Sterne, with a malignant grin. "Pray, sir, what language do you call it?"

Lytton was so enraged at these remarks, and at the favor with which they appeared to be received, that

he endeavored to stutter out some reply, and then, losing control of himself completely, picked up all his loose papers and strode out of the room, dropping pamphlets and speeches at every step. This incident amused the company so much that they laughed for several minutes without cessation. Gradually the sound of their laughter sounded more and more harshly in my ears, the lights on the table grew dim and the company more misty, until they and their symposium vanished away altogether. I was sitting before the embers of what had been a roaring fire, but was now little more than a heap of gray ashes, and the merry laughter of the august company had changed to the recriminations of my wife, who was shaking me violently by the shoulder and exhorting me to choose some more seasonable spot for my slumbers. So ended the wondrous adventures of Master Cyprian Overbeck Wells, but I still live in the hopes that in some future dream the great masters may themselves finish that which they have begun.

THE END.

THE RING OF THOTH.

Mr. John Vansittart Smith, F.R.S., of 147-A Gower Street, was a man whose energy of purpose and clearness of thought might have placed him in the very first rank of scientific observers. He was the victim, however, of a universal ambition which prompted him to aim at distinction in many subjects rather than pre-eminence in one. In his early days he had shown an aptitude for zoölogy and for botany which caused his friends to look upon him as a second Darwin, but when a professorship was almost within his reach, he had suddenly discontinued his studies and turned his whole attention to chemistry. Here his researches upon the spectra of the metals had won him his fellowship in the Royal Society; but again he played the coquette with his subject, and after a year's absence from the laboratory he joined the Oriental Society, and delivered a paper on the Hieroglyphic and Demotic inscriptions of El Kab, thus giving a crowning example both of the versatility and of the inconstancy of his talents.

The most fickle of wooers, however, is apt to be caught at last, and so it was with John Vansittart

Smith. The more he burrowed his way into Egyptology the more impressed he became by the vast field which it opened to the inquirer, and by the extreme importance of a subject which promised to throw a light upon the first germs of human civilization and the origin of the greater part of our arts and sciences. So struck was Mr. Smith that he straightway married an Egyptological young lady who had written upon the sixth dynasty, and having thus secured a sound basis of operations, he set himself to collect materials for a work which should unite the research of Lepsius and the ingenuity of Champollion. The preparation of this *magnum opus* entailed many hurried visits to the magnificent Egyptian collections of the Louvre, upon the last of which, no longer ago than the middle of last October, he became involved in a most strange and noteworthy adventure.

The trains had been slow and the Channel had been rough, so that the student arrived in Paris in a somewhat befogged and feverish condition. On reaching the Hotel de France, in the Rue Lafitte, he had thrown himself upon a sofa for a couple of hours, but finding that he was unable to sleep, he determined, in spite of his fatigue, to make his way to the Louvre, settle the point which he had come to decide, and take the evening train back to Dieppe. Having come to this conclusion, he donned his great-coat, for it was a raw, rainy day, and made his way across the Boulevard des Italiens and down the Avenue de l'Opera. Once in the Louvre he was on familiar ground, and he speedily made his way to the

collection of papyri which it was his intention to consult.

The warmest admirers of John Vansittart Smith could hardly claim for him that he was a handsome man. His high-beaked nose and prominent chin had something of the same acute and incisive character which distinguished his intellect. He held his head in a bird-like fashion, and bird-like, too, was the pecking motion with which, in conversation, he threw out his objections and retorts. As he stood, with the high collar of his great-coat raised to his ears, he might have seen from the reflection in the glass case before him that his appearance was a singular one. Yet it came upon him as a sudden jar when an English voice behind him exclaimed in very audible tones, "What a queer-looking mortal!"

The student had a large amount of petty vanity in his composition which manifested itself by an ostentatious and overdone disregard of all personal considerations. He straightened his lips and looked rigidly at the roll of papyrus, while his heart filled with bitterness against the whole race of traveling Britons.

"Yes," said another voice, "he really is an extraordinary fellow."

"Do you know," said the first speaker, "one could almost believe that by the continual contemplation of mummies the chap has become half a mummy himself?"

"He has certainly an Egyptian cast of countenance," said the other.

John Vansittart Smith spun round upon his heel

with the intention of shaming his countrymen by a corrosive remark or two. To his surprise and relief, the two young fellows who had been conversing had their shoulders turned toward him, and were gazing at one of the Louvre attendants who was polishing some brass-work at the other side of the room.

"Carter will be waiting for us at the Palais Royal," said one tourist to the other, glancing at his watch, and they clattered away, leaving the student to his labors.

"I wonder what these chatterers call an Egyptian cast of countenance," thought John Vansittart Smith, and he moved his position slightly in order to catch a glimpse of the man's face. He started as his eyes fell upon it. It was indeed the very face with which his studies had made him familiar. The regular statuesque features, broad brow, well-rounded chin, and dusky complexion were the exact counterpart of the innumerable statues, mummy cases, and pictures which adorned the walls of the apartment. The thing was beyond all coincidence. The man must be an Egyptian. The national angularity of the shoulders and narrowness of the hips were alone sufficient to identify him.

John Vansittart Smith shuffled toward the attendant with some intention of addressing him. He was not light of touch in conversation, and found it difficult to strike the happy mean between the brusqueness of the superior and the geniality of the equal. As he came nearer, the man presented his side face to him, but kept his gaze still bent upon his work. Vansittart Smith, fixing his eyes upon

the fellow's skin, was conscious of a sudden impression that there was something inhuman and preternatural about its appearance. Over the temple and cheek-bone it was as glazed and as shiny as varnished parchment. There was no suggestion of pores. One could not fancy a drop of moisture upon that arid surface. From brow to chin, however, it was cross-hatched by a million delicate wrinkles which shot and interlaced as though Nature in some Maori mood had tried how wild and intricate a pattern she could devise.

"Où est la collection de Memphis?" asked the student, with the awkward air of a man who is devising a question merely for the purpose of opening a conversation.

"C'est là," replied the man, brusquely, nodding his head at the other side of the room.

"Vous êtes un Egyptien, n'est-ce pas?" asked the Englishman.

The attendant looked up and turned his strange, dark eyes upon his questioner. They were vitreous, with a misty, dry shininess, such as Smith had never seen in a human head before. As he gazed into them he saw some strong emotion gather in their depths, which rose and deepened until it broke into a look of something akin both to horror and to hatred.

"Non, monsieur; je suis Français." The man turned abruptly and bent low over his polishing. The student gazed at him for a moment in astonishment, and then turning to a chair in a retired corner behind one of the doors, he proceeded to make notes of his researches among the papyri. His

thoughts, however, refused to return into their natural groove. They would run upon the enigmatical attendant with the sphinx-like face and the parchment skin.

"Where have I seen such eyes?" said Vansittart Smith to himself. "There is something saurian about them, something reptilian. There's the membrana nictitans of the snakes," he mused, bethinking himself of his zoölogical studies. "It gives a shiny effect. But there was something more here. There was a sense of power, of wisdom—so I read them—and of weariness, utter weariness, and ineffable despair. It may be all imagination, but I never had so strong an impression. By Jove, I must have another look at them!" He rose and paced round the Egyptian rooms, but the man who had excited his curiosity had disappeared.

The student sat down again in his quiet corner, and continued to work at his notes. He had gained the information which he required from the papyri; and it only remained to write it down while it was still fresh in his memory. For a time his pencil traveled rapidly over the paper, but soon the lines became less level, the words more blurred, and finally the pencil tinkled down upon the floor, and the head of the student dropped heavily forward upon his chest. Tired out by his journey, he slept so soundly in his lonely post behind the door that neither the clanking civil guard, nor the footsteps of sightseers, nor even the loud, hoarse bell which gives the signal for closing, were sufficient to arouse him.

Twilight deepened into darkness, the bustle from the Rue de Rivoli waxed and then waned, distant Notre Dame clanged out the hour of midnight, and still the dark and lonely figure sat silently in the shadow. It was not until close upon one in the morning that, with a sudden gasp and an intaking of the breath, Vansittart Smith returned to consciousness. For a moment it flashed upon him that he had dropped asleep in his study-chair at home. The moon was shining fitfully through the unshuttered window, however, and, as his eye ran along the lines of mummies and the endless array of polished cases, he remembered clearly where he was and how he came there. The student was not a nervous man. He possessed that love of a novel situation which is peculiar to his race. Stretching out his cramped limbs, he looked at his watch, and burst into a chuckle as he observed the hour. The episode would make an admirable anecdote to be introduced into his next paper as a relief to the graver and heavier speculations. He was a little cold, but wide awake and much refreshed. It was no wonder that the guardians had overlooked him, for the door threw its heavy black shadow right across him.

The complete silence was impressive. Neither outside nor inside was there a creak or a murmur. He was alone with the dead men of a dead civilization. What though the outer city reeked of the garish nineteenth century? In all this chamber there was scarce an article, from the shriveled ear of wheat to the pigment box of the painter, which had not held its own against four thousand years. Here were the

flotsam and jetsam washed up by the great ocean of time from that far-off empire. From stately Thebes, from lordly Luxor, from the great temples of Heliopolis, from a hundred rifled tombs, these relics had been brought. The student glanced round at the long-silent figures who flickered vaguely up through the gloom, at the busy toilers who were now so restful, and he fell into a reverent and thoughtful mood. An unwonted sense of his own youth and insignificance came over him. Leaning back in his chair, he gazed dreamily down the long vista of rooms, all silvery with the moon shine, which extend through the whole wing of the widespread building. His eyes fell upon the yellow glare of a distant lamp.

John Vansittart Smith sat up on his chair with his nerves all on edge. The light was advancing slowly toward him, pausing from time to time, and then coming jerkily onward. The bearer moved noiselessly. In the utter silence there was no suspicion of the pat of a footfall. An idea of robbers entered the Englishman's head. He snuggled up further into the corner. The light was two rooms off. Now it was in the next chamber, and still there was no sound. With something approaching to a thrill of fear, the student observed a face, floating in the air as it were, behind the flare of the lamp. The figure was wrapped in shadow, but the light fell full upon the strange, eager face. There was no mistaking the metallic, glistening eyes and the cadaverous skin. It was the attendant with whom he had conversed.

Vansittart Smith's first impulse was to come forward and address him. A few words of explanation would set the matter clear, and lead doubtless to his being conducted to some side door from which he might make his way to his hotel. As the man entered the chamber, however, there was something so stealthy in his movements, and so furtive in his expression, that the Englishman altered his intention. This was clearly no ordinary official walking the rounds. The fellow wore felt-soled slippers, stepped with a rising chest, and glanced quickly from left to right, while his hurried, gasping breathing thrilled the flame of his lamp. Vansittart Smith crouched silently back into the corner and watched him keenly, convinced that his errand was one of secret and probably sinister import.

There was no hesitation in the other's movements. He stepped lightly and swiftly across to one of the great cases, and, drawing a key from his pocket, he unlocked it. From the upper shelf he pulled down a mummy, which he bore away with him, and laid it with much care and solicitude upon the ground. By it he placed his lamp, and then squatting down beside it in Eastern fashion, he began with long, quivering fingers to undo the cere-cloths and bandages which girt it round. As the crackling rolls of linen peeled off one after the other, a strong aromatic odor filled the chamber, and fragments of scented wood and of spices spattered down upon the marble floor.

It was clear to John Vansittart Smith that this mummy had never been unswathed before. The

operation interested him keenly. He thrilled all over with curiosity, and his bird-like head protruded further and further from behind the door. When, however, the last roll had been removed from the four-thousand-year-old head, it was all that he could do to stifle an outcry of amazement. First, a cascade of long, black, glossy tresses poured over the workman's hands and arms. A second turn of the bandage revealed a low white forehead, with a pair of delicately arched eyebrows. A third uncovered a pair of bright, deeply fringed eyes, and a straight, well-cut nose, while a fourth and last showed a sweet, full, sensitive mouth, and a beautifully curved chin. The whole face was one of extraordinary loveliness, save for the one blemish that in the center of the forehead there was a single irregular, coffee-colored splotch. It was a triumph of the embalmer's art. Vansittart Smith's eyes grew larger and larger as he gazed upon it, and he chirruped in his throat with satisfaction.

Its effect upon the Egyptologist was as nothing, however, compared with that which it produced upon the strange attendant. He threw his hands up into the air, burst into a harsh clatter of words, and then, hurling himself down upon the ground beside the mummy, he threw his arms round her, and kissed her repeatedly upon the lips and brow. "Ma petite!" he groaned in French. "Ma pauvre petite!" His voice broke with emotion, and his innumerable wrinkles quivered and writhed, but the student observed in the lamp-light that his shining

eyes were still as dry and tearless as two beads of steel. For some minutes he lay, with a twitching face, crooning and moaning over the beautiful head. Then he broke into a sudden smile, said some words in an unknown tongue, and sprung to his feet with the vigorous air of one who has braced himself for an effort.

In the center of the room there was a large circular case which contained, as the student had frequently remarked, a magnificent collection of early Egyptian rings and precious stones. To this the attendant strode, and, unlocking it, he threw it open. On the ledge at the side he placed his lamp, and beside it a small earthenware jar which he had drawn from his pocket. He then took a handful of rings from the case, and with a most serious and anxious face he proceeded to smear each in turn with some liquid substance from the earthen pot, holding them to the light as he did so. He was clearly disappointed with the first lot, for he threw them petulantly back into the case, and drew out some more. One of these, a massive ring with a large crystal set in it, he seized and eagerly tested with the contents of the jar. Instantly he uttered a cry of joy, and threw out his arms in a wild gesture which upset the pot and sent the liquid streaming across the floor to the very feet of the Englishman. The attendant drew a red handkerchief from his bosom, and, mopping up the mess, he followed it into the corner, where in a moment he found himself face to face with his observer.

"Excuse me," said John Vansittart Smith, with

all imaginable politeness; "I have been unfortunate enough to fall asleep behind this door."

"And you have been watching me?" the other asked in English, with a most venomous look on his corpse-like face.

The student was a man of veracity. "I confess," said he, "that I have noticed your movements, and that they have aroused my curiosity and interest in the highest degree."

The man drew a long, flamboyant-bladed knife from his bosom. "You have had a very narrow escape," he said; "had I seen you ten minutes ago, I should have driven this through your heart. As it is, if you touch me or interfere with me in any way you are a dead man."

"I have no wish to interfere with you," the student answered. "My presence here is entirely accidental. All I ask is that you will have the extreme kindness to show me out through some side door." He spoke with great suavity, for the man was still pressing the tip of his dagger against the palm of his left hand, as though to assure himself of its sharpness, while his face preserved its malignant expression.

"If I thought—" said he. "But no, perhaps it is as well. What is your name?"

The Englishman gave it.

"Vansittart Smith," the other repeated. "Are you the same Vansittart Smith who gave a paper in London upon El Kab? I saw a report of it. Your knowledge of the subject is contemptible."

"Sir!" cried the Egyptologist.

"Yet it is superior to that of many who make even greater pretensions. The whole keystone of our old life in Egypt was not the inscriptions or monuments of which you make so much but was our hermetic philosophy and mystic knowledge, of which you say little or nothing."

"Our old life!" repeated the scholar, wide-eyed; and then suddenly: "Good God, look at the mummy's face!"

The strange man turned and flashed his light upon the dead woman, uttering a long, doleful cry as he did so. The action of the air had already undone all the art of the embalmer. The skin had fallen away, the eyes had sunk inward, the discolored lips had writhed away from the yellow teeth, and the brown mark upon the forehead alone showed that it was indeed the same face which had shown such youth and beauty a few short minutes before.

The man flapped his hands together in grief and horror. Then mastering himself by a strong effort, he turned his hard eyes once more upon the Englishman.

"It does not matter," he said, in a shaking voice. "It does not really matter. I came here to-night with the fixed determination to do something. It is now done. All else is as nothing. I have found my quest. The old curse is broken. I can rejoin her. What matter about her inanimate shell so long as her spirit is awaiting me at the other side of the veil!"

"These are wild words," said Vansittart Smith

He was becoming more and more convinced that he had to do with a madman.

"Time presses, and I must go," continued the other. "The moment is at hand for which I have waited this weary time. But I must show you out first. Come with me."

Taking up the lamp, he turned from the disordered chamber, and led the student swiftly through the long series of the Egyptian, Assyrian, an Persian apartments. At the end of the latter he pushed open a small door let into the wall, and descended a winding stone stair. The Englishman felt the cold fresh air of the night upon his brow. There was a door opposite him which appeared to communicate with the street. To the right of this another door stood ajar, throwing a spurt of yellow light across the passage. "Come in here!" said the attendant shortly.

Vansittart Smith hesitated. He had hoped that he had come to the end of his adventure. Yet his curiosity was strong within him. He could not leave the matter unsolved, so he followed his strange companion into the lighted chamber.

It was a small room, such as is devoted to a *concierge*. A wood fire sparkled in the grate. At one side stood a truckle bed, and at the other a coarse wooden chair, with a round table in the center, which bore the remains of a meal. As the visitor's eye glanced round he could not but remark with an ever-recurring thrill that all the small details of the room were of the most quaint design and antique workmanship. The candlesticks, the vases

upon the chimney-piece, the fire-irons, the ornaments upon the walls, were all such as he had been wont to associate with the remote past. The gnarled, heavy-eyed man sat himself down upon the edge of the bed, and motioned his guest into the chair.

"There may be design in this," he said, still speaking excellent English. "It may be decreed that I should leave some account behind as a warning to all rash mortals who would set their wits up against workings of Nature. I leave it with you. Make such use as you will of it. I speak to you now with my feet upon the threshold of the other world.

"I am, as you surmised, an Egyptian—not one of the down-trodden race of slaves who now inhabit the Delta of the Nile, but a survivor of that fiercer and harder people who tamed the Hebrew, drove the Ethiopian back into the southern deserts, and built those mighty works which have been the envy and the wonder of all after generations. It was in the reign of Tuthmosis, sixteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, that I first saw the light. You shrink away from me. Wait, and you will see that I am more to be pitied than to be feared.

"My name was Sosra. My father had been the chief priest of Osiris in the great temple of Abaris, which stood in those days upon the Bubastic branch of the Nile. I was brought up in the temple and was trained in all those mystic arts which are spoken of in your own Bible. I was an apt pupil. Before I was sixteen I had learned all which the wisest priest could teach me. From that time on I studied

Nature's secrets for myself, and shared my knowledge with no man.

"Of all the questions which attracted me there were none over which I labored so long as over those which concern themselves with the nature of life. I probed deeply into the vital principle. The aim of medicine had been to drive away disease when it appeared. It seemed to me that a method might be devised which should so fortify the body as to prevent weakness or death from ever taking hold of it. It is useless that I should recount my researches. You would scarce comprehend them if I did. They were carried out partly upon animals, partly upon slaves, and partly on myself. Suffice it that their result was to furnish me with a substance which, when injected into the blood, would endow the body with strength to resist the effects of time, of violence, or of disease. It would not, indeed, confer immortality, but its potency would endure for many thousands of years. I used it upon a cat, and afterward drugged the creature with the most deadly poisons. That cat is alive in Lower Egypt at the present moment. There was nothing of mystery or magic in the matter. It was simply a chemical discovery, which may well be made again.

"Love of life runs high in the young. It seemed to me that I had broken away from all human care now that I had abolished pain and driven death to such a distance. With a light heart I poured the accursed stuff into my veins. Then I looked round for some one whom I could benefit. There was a young priest of Thoth, Parmes by name, who had won

my good will by his earnest nature and his devotion to his studies. To him I whispered my secret, and at his request I injected him with my elixir. I should now, I reflected, never be without a companion of the same age as myself.

"After this grand discovery I relaxed my studies to some extent, but Parmes continued his with redoubled energy. Every day I could see him working with his flasks and his distiller in the Temple of Thoth, but he said little to me as to the result of his labors. For my own part, I used to walk through the city and look around me with exultation as I reflected that all this was destined to pass away, and that only I should remain. The people would bow to me as they passed me, for the fame of my knowledge had gone abroad.

"There was war at this time, and the great king had sent down his soldiers to the eastern boundary to drive away the Hyksos. A governor, too, was sent to Abaris, that he might hold it for the king. I had heard much of the beauty of the daughter of this governor, but one day as I walked out with Parmes we met her, borne upon the shoulders of her slaves. I was struck with love as with lightning. My heart went out from me. I could have thrown myself beneath the feet of her bearers. This was my woman. Life without her was impossible. I swore by the head of Horus that she should be mine. I swore it to the priest of Thoth. He turned away from me with a brow which was as black as midnight.

"There is no need to tell you of our wooing. She came to love me even as I loved her. I learned that

Parmes had seen her before I did, and had shown her that he too loved her; but I could smile at his passion, for I knew that her heart was mine. The white plague had come upon the city, and many were stricken, but I laid my hands upon the sick and nursed them without fear or scathe. She marveled at my daring. Then I told her my secret, and begged her that she would let me use my art upon her.

"'Your flower shall then be unwithered, Atma,' I said. 'Other things may pass away, but you and I, and our great love for each other, shall outlive the tomb of King Chefru.'

"But she was full of timid, maidenly objections. 'Was it right?' she asked, 'was it not a thwarting of the will of the gods? If the great Osiris had wished that our years should be so long, would he not himself have brought it about?'

"With fond and loving words I overcame her doubts; and yet she hesitated. It was a great question, she said. She would think it over for this one night. In the morning I should know her resolution. Surely one night was not too much to ask. She wished to pray to Isis for help in her decision.

"With a sinking heart and a sad foreboding of evil, I left her with her tirewomen. In the morning, when the early sacrifice was over, I hurried to her house. A frightened slave met me upon the steps. Her mistress was ill, she said, very ill. In a frenzy I broke my way through the attendants, and rushed through hall and corridor to my Atma's chamber.

She lay upon her couch, her head high upon the pillow, with a pallid face and a glazed eye. On her forehead there blazed a single angry purple patch. I knew that hell-mark of old. It was the scar of the white plague, the sign-manual of death.

"Why should I speak of that terrible time? For months I was mad, fevered, delirious, and yet I could not die. Never did an Arab thirst after the sweet wells as I longed after death. Could poison or steel have shortened the thread of my existence, I should soon have rejoined my love in the land with the narrow portal. I tried, but it was of no avail. The accursed influence was too strong upon me. One night as I lay upon my couch, weak and weary, Parmes, the priest of Thoth, came to my chamber. He stood in the circle of the lamp-light, and he looked down upon me with eyes which were bright with a mad joy.

"'Why did you let the maiden die?' he asked; 'why did you not strengthen her as you strengthened me?'

"'It was too late,' I answered. 'But I had forgotten. You also loved her. You are my fellow in misfortune. Is it not terrible to think of the centuries which must pass ere we look upon her again? Fools, fools, that we were to take death to be our enemy!'

"'You may say that,' he cried, with a wild laugh; 'the words come well from your lips. For me they have no meaning.'

"'What mean you?' I cried, raising myself upon my elbow. 'Surely, friend, this grief has turned

your brain.' His face was aflame with joy, and he writhed and shook like one who hath a devil.

"'Do you know whither I go?' he asked.

"'Nay,' I answered, 'I cannot tell.'

"'I go to her,' said he. 'She lies embalmed in the further tomb by the double palm-tree beyond the city wall.'

"'Why do you go there?' I asked.

"'To die!' he shrieked, 'to die! I am not bound by earthen fetters.'

"'But the elixir is in your blood,' I cried.

"'I can defy it,' said he; 'I have found a stronger principle which will destroy it. It is working in my veins at this moment, and in an hour I shall be a dead man. I shall join her, and you shall remain behind.'

"As I looked upon him I could see that he spoke words of truth. The light in his eyes told me that he was indeed beyond the power of the elixir.

"'You will teach me!' I cried.

"'Never!' he answered.

"'I implore you, by the wisdom of Thoth, by the majesty of Anubis!'

"'It is useless,' he said, coldly.

"'Then I will find it out,' I cried.

"'You cannot,' he answered; 'it came to me by chance. There is one ingredient which you can never get. Save that which is in the ring of Thoth, none will ever more be made.'

"'In the ring of Thoth!' I repeated; 'where, then, is the ring of Thoth?'

"'That also you shall never know,' he answered.

'You won her love. Who has won in the end? I leave you to your sordid earth life. My chains are broken. I must go!' He turned upon his heel and fled from the chamber. In the morning came the news that the priest of Thoth was dead.

"My days after that were spent in study. I must find this subtle poison which was strong enough to undo the elixir. From early dawn to midnight I bent over the test-tube and the furnace. Above all, I collected the papyri and the chemical flasks of the priest of Thoth. Alas! they taught me little. Here and there some hint or stray expression would raise hope in my bosom, but no good ever came of it. Still, month after month, I struggled on. When my heart grew faint I would make my way to the tomb by the palm-trees. There, standing by the dead casket from which the jewel had been rifled, I would feel her sweet presence, and would whisper to her that I would rejoin her if mortal wit could solve the riddle.

"Parmes had said that his discovery was connected with the ring of Thoth. I had some remembrance of the trinket. It was a large and weighty circlet, made, not of gold, but of a rarer and heavier metal brought from the mines of Mount Harbal. Platinum, you call it. The ring had, I remembered, a hollow crystal set in it, in which some few drops of liquid might be stored. Now, the secret of Parmes could not have to do with the metal alone, for there were many rings of that metal in the Temple. Was it not more likely that he had stored his precious poison within the cavity of the crystal? I had

scarce come to this conclusion before, in hunting through his papers, I came upon one which told me that it was indeed so, and that there was still some of the liquid unused.

"But how to find the ring? It was not upon him when he was stripped for the embalmer. Of that I made sure. Neither was it among his private effects. In vain I searched every room that he had entered, every box, and vase, and chattel that he had owned. I sifted the very sand of the desert in the places where he had been wont to walk; but, do what I would, I could come upon no traces of the ring of Thoth. Yet it may be that my labours would have overcome all obstacles had it not been for a new and unlooked-for misfortune.

"A great war had been waged against the Hyksos, and the captains of the great king had been cut off in the desert, with all their bowmen and horsemen. The shepherd tribes were upon us like the locusts in a dry year. From the wilderness of Shur to the great bitter lake there was blood by day and fire by night. Abaris was the bulwark of Egypt, but we could not keep the savages back. The city fell. The governor and the soldiers were put to the sword, and I, with many more, was led away into captivity.

"For years and years I tended cattle in the great plains by the Euphrates. My master died, and his son grew old, but I was still as far from death as ever. At last I escaped upon a swift camel, and made my way back to Egypt. The Hyksos had settled in the land which they had conquered, and

their own king ruled over the country. Abaris had been torn down, the city had been burned, and of the great temple there was nothing left save an unsightly mound. Everywhere the tombs had been rifled and the monuments destroyed. Of my Atma's grave no sign was left. It was buried in the sands of the desert, and the palm-trees which marked the spot had long disappeared. The papers of Parmes and the remains of the Temple of Thoth were either destroyed or scattered far and wide over the deserts of Syria. All search after them was vain.

"From that time I gave up all hope of ever finding the ring or discovering the subtle drug. I set myself to live as patiently as might be until the effect of the elixir should wear away. How can you understand how terrible a thing time is, you who have experienced only the narrow course which lies between the cradle and the grave! I know it to my cost, I who have floated down the whole stream of history. I was old when Illium fell. I was very old when Herodotus came to Memphis. I was bowed down with years when the new Gospel came upon earth. Yet you see me much as other men are, with the cursed elixir still sweetening my blood, and guarding me against that which I would court. Now at last, at last, I have come to the end of it!

"I have traveled in all lands and I have dwelt with all nations. Every tongue is the same to me. I learned them all to help pass the weary time. I need not tell you how slowly they drifted by, the long dawn of modern civilization, the dreary middle

years, the dark times of barbarism. They are all behind me now. I have never looked with the eyes of love upon another woman. Atma knows that I have been constant to her.

"It was my custom to read all that the scholars had to say upon ancient Egypt. I have been in many positions, sometimes affluent, sometimes poor, but I have always found enough to enable me to buy the journals which deal with such matters. Some nine months ago I was in San Francisco, when I read an account of some discoveries made in the neighborhood of Abaris. My heart leaped into my mouth as I read it. It said that the excavator had busied himself in exploring some tombs recently unearthed. In one there had been found an unopened mummy with an inscription upon the outer case setting forth that it contained the body of the daughter of the governor of the city in the days of Tuthmosis. It added that on removing the outer case there had been exposed a large platinum ring set with a crystal, which had been laid upon the breast of the embalmed woman. This, then, was where Parmes had hidden the ring of Thoth. He might well say that it was safe, for no Egyptian would ever stain his soul by moving even the outer case of a buried friend.

"That very night I set off from San Francisco, and in a few weeks I found myself once more at Abaris, if a few sand-heaps and crumbling walls may retain the name of the great city. I hurried to the Frenchmen who were digging there and asked them for the ring. They replied that both the ring

and the mummy had been sent to the Boulak Museum at Cairo. To Boulak I went, but only to be told that Mariette Bey had claimed them and had shipped them to the Louvre. I followed them, and there at last, in the Egyptian chamber, I came, after close upon four thousand years, upon the remains of my Atma, and upon the ring for which I had sought so long.

"But how was I to lay hands upon them? How was I to have them for my very own? It chanced that the office of attendant was vacant. I went to the director. I convinced him that I knew much about Egypt. In my eagerness I said too much. He remarked that a professor's chair would suit me better than a seat in the *conciergerie*. I knew more, he said, than he did. It was only by blundering and letting him think that he had over-estimated my knowledge, that I prevailed upon him to let me move the few effects which I have retained into this chamber. It is my first and my last night here.

"Such is my story, Mr. Vansittart Smith. I need not say more to a man of your perception. By a strange chance you have this night looked upon the face of the woman whom I loved in those far-off days. There were many rings with crystals in the case, and I had to test for the platinum to be sure of the one which I wanted. A glance at the crystal has shown me that the liquid is indeed within it, and that I shall at last be able to shake off that accursed health which has been worse to me than the foulest disease. I have nothing more to say to

you. I have unburdened myself. You may tell my story or you may withhold it at your pleasure. The choice rests with you. I owe you some amends, for you have had a narrow escape of your life this night. I was a desperate man, and not to be balked in my purpose. Had I seen you before the thing was done, I might have put it beyond your power to oppose me or raise an alarm. This is the door. It leads into the Rue de Rivoli. Good night!"

The Englishman glanced back. For a moment the lean figure of Sosra the Egyptian stood framed in the narrow doorway. The next the door had slammed, and the heavy rasping of a bolt broke on the silent night.

It was on the second day after his return to London that Mr. John Vansittart Smith saw the following concise narrative in the Paris correspondence of the *Times:*

"*Curious Occurrence in the Louvre.*—Yesterday morning a strange discovery was made in the principal Egyptian chamber. The *ouvriers* who are employed to clean out the rooms in the morning found one of the attendants lying dead upon the floor with his arms round one of the mummies. So close was his embrace that it was only with the utmost difficulty that they were separated. One of the cases containing valuable rings had been opened and rifled. The authorities are of opinion that the man was bearing away the mummy with some idea of selling it to a private collector, but that he was struck down in the very act by long-standing dis-

ease of the heart. It is said that he was a man of uncertain age and eccentric habits, without any living relations to mourn over his dramatic and untimely end."

JOHN HUXFORD'S HIATUS.

STRANGE it is and wonderful to mark how upon this planet of ours the smallest and most insignificant of events set a train of consequences in motion which act and react until their final results are portentous and incalculable. Set a force rolling, however small, and who can say where it shall end, or what it may lead to! Trifles develop into tragedies, and the bagatelle of one day ripens into the catastrophe of the next. An oyster throws out a secretion to surround a grain of sand, and so a pearl comes into being; a pearl diver fishes it up; a merchant buys it and sells it to a jeweler, who disposes of it to a customer. The customer is robbed of it by two scoundrels, who quarrel over the booty. One slays the other, and perishes himself upon the scaffold. Here is a direct chain of events with a sick mollusk for its first link, and a gallows for its last one. Had that grain of sand not chanced to wash in between the shells of the bivalve, two living, breathing beings with all their potentialities for good and for evil would not have been blotted out from among their fellows. Who shall undertake to judge what is really small and what is great?

Thus when in the year 1821, Don Diego Salvador bethought him that if it paid the heretics in England to import the bark of his cork oaks, it would pay him also to found a factory by which the corks might be cut and sent out ready made, surely at first sight no very vital human interests would appear to be affected. Yet there were poor folk who would suffer, and suffer acutely—women who would weep, and men who would become sallow and hungry-looking and dangerous in places of which the don had never heard, and all on account of that one idea which had flashed across him as he strutted, cigarettiferous, beneath the grateful shades of his limes. So crowded is this old globe of ours, and so interlaced our interests, that one cannot think a new thought without some poor devil being the better or the worse for it.

Don Diego Salvador was a capitalist, and the abstract thought soon took the concrete form of a square, plastered building wherein a couple of hundred of his swarthy countrymen worked with deft, nimble fingers at a rate of pay which no English artisan could have accepted. Within a few months, the result of this new competition was an abrupt fall in prices in the trade, which was serious for the largest firms and disastrous for the smaller ones. A few old-established houses held on as they were, others reduced their establishments and cut down their expenses, while one or two put up their shutters and confessed themselves beaten. In this last unfortunate category was the ancient and respected firm of Fairbairn Brothers of Brisport.

Several causes had led up to this disaster, though Don Diego's *début* as a cork-cutter had brought matters to a head. When a couple of generations back, the original Fairbairn had founded the business, Brisport was a little fishing town with no outlet or occupation for her superfluous population. Men were glad to have safe and continuous work upon any terms. All this was altered now, for the town was expanding into the center of a large district in the west, and the demand for labor and its remuneration had proportionately increased. Again, in the old days, when carriage was ruinous and communication slow, the vintners of Exeter and of Barnstaple were glad to buy their corks from their neighbor of Brisport; but now the large London houses sent down their travelers, who competed with each other to gain the local custom, until profits were cut down to the vanishing point. For a long time the firm had been in a precarious position, but this further drop in prices settled the matter, and compelled Mr. Charles Fairbairn, the acting manager, to close his establishment.

It was a murky, foggy Saturday afternoon in November when the hands were paid for the last time, and the old building was to be finally abandoned. Mr. Fairbairn, an anxious-faced, sorrow-worn man, stood on a raised dais by the cashier while he handed the little pile of hardly earned shillings and coppers to each successive workman as the long procession filed past his table. It was usual with the employees to clatter away the instant that they had been paid, like so many children let

out of school; but to-day they waited, forming little groups over the great dreary room, and discussing in subdued voices the misfortune which had come upon their employers, and the future which awaited themselves. When the last pile of coins had been handed across the table, and the last name checked by the cashier, the whole throng faced silently round to the man who had been their master, and waited expectantly for any words which he might have to say to them.

Mr. Charles Fairbairn had not expected this, and it embarrassed him. He had waited as a matter of routine duty until the wages were paid, but he was a taciturn, slow-witted man, and he had not foreseen this sudden call upon his oratorical powers. He stroked his thin cheek nervously with his long white fingers, and looked down with weak, watery eyes at the mosaic of upturned, serious faces.

"I am sorry that we have to part, my men," he said at last in a crackling voice. "It's a bad day for all of us, and for Brisport too. For three years we have been losing money over the works. We held on in the hope of a change coming, but matters are going from bad to worse. There's nothing for it but to give it up before the balance of our fortune is swallowed up. I hope you may all be able to get work of some sort before very long. Good-by, and God bless you!"

"God bless you, sir! God bless you!" cried a chorus of rough voices. "Three cheers for Mr. Charles Fairbairn!" shouted a bright-eyed, smart young fellow, springing upon a bench and waving

his peaked cap in the air. The crowd responded to the call, but their huzzas wanted the true ring which only a joyous heart can give. Then they began to flock out into the sunlight, looking back as they went at the long deal tables and the cork-strewn floor—above all at the sad-faced, solitary man, whose cheeks were flecked with color at the rough cordiality of their farewell.

"Huxford," said the cashier, touching on the shoulder the young fellow who had led the cheering, "the governor wants to speak to you."

The workman turned back and stood swinging his cap awkwardly in front of his ex-employer, while the crowd pushed on until the doorway was clear, and the heavy fog wreaths rolled unchecked into the deserted factory.

"Ah, John!" said Mr. Fairbairn, coming suddenly out of his reverie and taking up a letter from the table. "You have been in my service since you were a boy, and you have shown that you merited the trust which I have placed in you. From what I have heard, I think I am right in saying that this sudden want of work will affect your plans more than it will many of my other hands."

"I was to be married at Shrovetide," the man answered, tracing a pattern upon the table with his horny forefinger. "I'll have to find work first."

"And work, my poor fellow, is by no means easy to find. You see you have been in this groove all your life, and are unfit for anything else. It's true you've been my foreman, but even that won't help you, for the factories all over England are discharg-

ing hands, and there's not a vacancy to be had. It's a bad outlook for you and such as you."

"What would you advise, then, sir?" asked John Huxford.

"That's what I was coming to. I have a letter here from Sheridan & Moore, of Montreal, asking for a good hand to take charge of a work-room. If you think it will suit you, you can go out by the next boat. The wages are far in excess of anything which I have been able to give you."

"Why, sir, this is real kind of you," the young workman said, earnestly. "She—my girl—Mary, will be as grateful to you as I am. I know what you say is right, and that if I had to look for work I should be likely to spend the little that I have laid by toward housekeeping before I found it. But, sir, with your leave I'd like to speak to her about it before I made up my mind. Could you leave it open for a few hours?"

"The mail goes out to-morrow," Mr. Fairbairn answered. "If you decide to accept you can write to-night. Here is their letter, which will give you their address."

John Huxford took the precious paper with a grateful heart. An hour ago his future had been all black, but now this rift of light had broken in the west, giving promise of better things. He would have liked to have said something expressive of his feelings to his employer, but the English nature is not effusive, and he could not get beyond a few choking, awkward words which were as awkwardly received by his benefactor. With a scrape and a

bow, he turned on his heel, and plunged out into the foggy street.

So thick was the vapor that the houses over the way were only a vague loom, but the foreman hurried on with springy steps through side streets and winding lanes, past walls where the fishermen's nets were drying, and over cobble-stoned alleys redolent of herring, until he reached a modest line of white-washed cottages fronting the sea. At the door of one of these the young man tapped, and then without waiting for a response, pressed down the latch and walked in.

An old, silvery-haired woman and a young girl hardly out of her teens were sitting on either side of the fire, and the latter sprung to her feet as he entered.

"You've got some good news, John," she cried putting her hands upon his shoulders, and looking into his eyes. "I can tell it from your step. Mr. Fairbairn is going to carry on after all."

"No, dear, not so good as that," John Huxford answered, smoothing back her rich brown hair; "but I have an offer of a place in Canada, with good money, and if you think as I do, I shall go out to it, and you can follow with the granny whenever I have made all straight for you at the other side. What say you to that, my lass?"

"Why, surely, John, what you think is right must be for the best," said the girl, quietly, with trust and confidence in her pale, plain face and loving, hazel eyes. "But poor granny, how is she to cross the seas?"

"Oh, never mind about me," the old woman broke in cheerfully. "I'll be no drag on you. If you want granny, granny's not too old to travel; and if you don't want her, why, she can look after the cottage, and have an English home ready for you whenever you turn back to the old country."

"Of course we shall need you, granny," John Huxford said, with a cheery laugh. "Fancy leaving granny behind! That would never do, Mary. But if you both come out, and if we are married all snug and proper at Montreal, we'll look through the whole city until we find a house something like this one, and we'll have creepers on the outside just the same, and when the doors are shut and we sit around the fire on the winter's nights, I'm hanged if we'll be able to tell that we're not at home. Besides, Mary, it's the same speech out there, the same king, and the same flag; it's not like a foreign country."

"No, of course not," Mary answered with conviction. She was an orphan with no living relation save her old grandmother, and no thought in life but to make a helpful and worthy wife to the man she loved. Where these two were she could not fail to find happiness. If John went to Canada, then Canada became home to her, for what had Brisport to offer when he was gone?

"I'm to write to-night, then, and accept?" the young man asked. "I knew you would both be of the same mind as myself, but of course I couldn't close with the offer until we had talked it over. I can get started in a week or two, and then in a

couple of months I'll have all ready for you on the other side."

"It will be a weary, weary time until we hear from you, dear John," said Mary, clasping his hand; "but it's God's will, and we must be patient. Here's pen and ink. You can sit at the table and write the letter which is to take the three of us across the Atlantic." Strange how Don Diego's thoughts were molding human lives in the little Devon village.

The acceptance was duly despatched, and John Huxford began immediately to prepare for his departure, for the Montreal firm had intimated that the vacancy was a certainty, and that the chosen man might come out without delay to take over his duties. In a very few days his scanty outfit was completed, and he started off in a coasting vessel for Liverpool, where he was to catch the passenger ship for Quebec.

"Remember, John," Mary whispered, as he pressed her to his heart upon the Brisport quay, "the cottage is our own, and come what may, we have always that to fall back upon. If things should chance to turn out badly over there, we have always a roof to cover us. There you will find me until you send word to us to come."

"And that will be very soon, my lass," he answered, cheerfully, with a last embrace. "Good-by, granny; good-by." The ship was a mile and more from the land before he lost sight of the figures of the straight, slim girl and her old companion, who stood watching and waving to him from the end of the gray stone quay. It was with a sink-

ing heart and a vague feeling of impending disaster that he saw them at last as minute specks in the distance, walking townward and disappearing amid the crowd who lined the beach.

From Liverpool the old woman and her granddaughter received a letter from John announcing that he was just starting in the bark "St. Lawrence," and six weeks afterward a second longer epistle informed them of his safe arrival at Quebec, and gave them his first impressions of the country. After that a long unbroken silence set in. Week after week and month after month passed by, and never a word came from across the seas. A year went over their heads, and yet another, but no news of the absentee. Sheridan & Moore were written to, and replied that though John Huxford's letter had reached them, he had never presented himself, and they had been forced to fill up the vacancy as best they could. Still, Mary and her grandmother hoped against hope, and looked out for the letter-carrier every morning with such eagerness that the kind-hearted man would often make a détour rather than pass the two pale, anxious faces which peered at him from the cottage window. At last, three years after the young foreman's disappearance, old granny died, and Mary was left alone, a broken, sorrowful woman, living as best she might on a small annuity which had descended to her, and eating her heart out as she brooded over the mystery which hung over the fate of her lover.

Among the shrewd west-country neighbors there had long, however, ceased to be any mystery in the

matter. Huxford arrived safely in Canada—so much was proved by his letter. Had he met with his end in any sudden way during the journey between Quebec and Montreal, there must have been some official inquiry, and his luggage would have sufficed to have established his identity. Yet the Canadian police had been communicated with, and had returned a positive answer that no inquest had been held, or any body found which could by any possibility be that of the young Englishman. The only alternative appeared to be that he had taken the first opportunity to break all the old ties, and had slipped away to the backwoods or to the States to commence life anew under an altered name. Why he should do this no one professed to know, but that he had done it appeared only too probable from the facts. Hence many a deep growl of righteous anger rose from the brawny smacksmen when Mary, with her pale face and sorrow-sunken head, passed along the quays on her way to her daily marketing; and it is more than likely that if the missing man had turned up in Brisport he might have met with some rough words or rougher usage, unless he could give some very good reason for his strange conduct. This popular view of the case never, however, occurred to the simple, trusting heart of the lonely girl; and as the years rolled by, her grief and her suspense were never for an instant tinged with a doubt as to the good faith of the missing man. From youth she grew into middle age, and from that into the autumn of her life, patient, long-suffering, and faithful, doing good as

far as lay in her power, and waiting humbly until fate should restore, either in this world or the next, that which it had so mysteriously deprived her of.

In the meantime neither the opinion held by the minority, that John Huxford was dead, nor that of the majority, which pronounced him to be faithless, represented the true state of the case. Still alive, and of stainless honor, he had yet been singled out by fortune as her victim in one of those strange freaks which are of such rare occurrence, and so beyond the general experience, that they might be put by as incredible, had we not the most trustworthy evidence of their occasional possibility.

Landing at Quebec, with his heart full of hope and courage, John selected a dingy room in a back street, where the terms were less exorbitant than elsewhere, and conveyed thither the two boxes which contained his worldly goods. After taking up his quarters there, he had half a mind to change again, for the landlady and the fellow-lodgers were by no means to his taste; but the Montreal coach started within a day or two, and he consoled himself by the thought that the discomfort would only last for that short time. Having written home to Mary to announce his safe arrival, he employed himself in seeing as much of the town as was possible, walking about all day, and only returning to his room at night.

It happened, however, that the house on which the unfortunate youth had pitched was one which was notorious for the character of its inmates. He had been directed to it by a pimp, who found reg-

ular employment in hanging about the docks and decoying newcomers to this den. The fellow's specious manner and proffered civility had led the simple-hearted west-countryman into the toils, and though his instinct told him that he was in unsafe company, he refrained, unfortunately, from at once making his escape. He contented himself with staying out all day, and associating as little as possible with the other inmates. From the few words which he did let drop, however, the landlady gathered that he was a stranger without a single friend in the country to inquire after him should misfortune overtake him.

The house had an evil reputation for the hocussing of sailors, which was done not only for the purpose of plundering them, but also to supply outgoing ships with crews, the men being carried on board insensible, and not coming to until the ship was well down the St. Lawrence. This trade caused the wretches who followed it to be experts in the use of stupefying drugs, and they determined to practise their arts upon their friendless lodger, so as to have an opportunity of ransacking his effects, and of seeing what it might be worth their while to purloin. During the day he invariably locked his door and carried off the key in his pocket, but if they could render him insensible for the night they could examine his boxes at their leisure, and deny afterward that he had ever brought with him the articles which he missed. It happened, therefore, upon the eve of Huxford's departure from Quebec, that he found, upon returning to his lodg-

ings, that his landlady and her two ill-favored sons, who assisted her in her trade, were waiting up for him over a bowl of punch, which they cordially invited him to share. It was a bitterly cold night, and the fragrant steam overpowered any suspicions which the young Englishman may have entertained; so he drained off a bumper, and then, retiring to his bedroom, threw himself upon his bed without undressing, and fell straight into a dreamless slumber, in which he still lay when the three conspirators crept into his chamber, and, having opened his boxes, began to investigate his effects.

It may have been that the speedy action of the drug caused its effect to be evanescent, or, perhaps, that the strong constitution of the victim threw it off with unusual rapidity. Whatever the cause, it is certain that John Huxford suddenly came to himself, and found the foul trio squatted round their booty, which they were dividing into the two categories of what was of value and should be taken, and what was valueless and might therefore be left. With a bound he sprung out of bed, and seizing the fellow nearest him by the collar, he slung him through the open doorway. His brother rushed at him, but the young Devonshire man met him with such a facer that he dropped in a heap upon the ground. Unfortunately, the violence of the blow caused him to overbalance himself, and, tripping over his prostrate antagonist, he came down heavily upon his face. Before he could rise, the old hag sprung upon his back and clung to him, shrieking to her son to bring the poker. John managed to shake himself clear of

them both, but before he could stand on his guard, he was felled from behind by a crashing blow from an iron bar, which stretched him senseless upon the floor.

"You've hit too hard, Joe," said the old woman, looking down at the prostrate figure. "I heard the bone go."

"If I hadn't fetched him down he'd ha' been too many for us," said the young villain, sulkily.

"Still, you might ha' done it without killing him, clumsy," said his mother. She had had a large experience of such scenes, and knew the difference between a stunning blow and a fatal one.

"He's still breathing," the other said, examining him; "the back o' his head's like a bag o' dice though. The skull's all splintered. He can't last. What are we to do?"

"He'll never come to himself again," the other brother remarked. "Sarve him right. Look at my face! Let's see, mother; who's in the house?"

"Only four drunk sailors."

"They wouldn't turn out for any noise. It's all quiet in the street. Let's carry him down a bit, Joe, and leave him there. He can die there, and no one think the worse of us."

"Take all the papers out of his pocket, then," the mother suggested; "they might help the police to trace him. His watch, too, and his money—£3 odd; better than nothing. Now carry him softly, and don't slip."

Kicking off their shoes, the two brothers carried the dying man down-stairs and along the deserted

street for a couple of hundred yards. There they laid him among the snow, where he was found by the night patrol, who carried him on a shutter to the hospital. He was duly examined by the resident surgeon, who bound up the wounded head, but gave it as his opinion that the man could not possibly live for more than twelve hours.

Twelve hours passed, however, and yet another twelve, but John Huxford still struggled hard for his life. When at the end of three days he was found to be still breathing, the interest of the doctors became aroused at his extraordinary vitality, and they bled him, as the fashion was in those days, and surrounded his shattered head with ice-bags. It may have been on account of these measures, or it may have been in spite of them, but at the end of a week's deep trance the nurse in charge was astonished to hear a gabbling noise, and to find the stranger sitting up on the couch and staring about him with wistful, wondering eyes. The surgeons were summoned to behold the phenomenon, and warmly congratulated each other upon the success of their treatment.

"You have been on the brink of the grave, my man," said one of them, pressing the bandaged head back on to the pillow; "you must not excite yourself. What is your name?"

No answer, save a wild stare.

"Where do you come from?"

Again no answer.

"He is mad," one suggested. "Or a foreigner," said another. "There were no papers on him when

he came in. His linen is marked 'J. H.' Let us try him in French and German."

They tested him with as many tongues as they could muster among them, but were compelled at last to give the matter over and to leave their silent patient still staring up wild-eyed at the whitewashed hospital ceiling.

For many weeks John lay in the hospital, and for many weeks efforts were made to gain some clew as to his antecedents, but in vain. He showed, as the time rolled by, not only by his demeanor, but also by the intelligence with which he began to pick up fragments of sentences, like a clever child learning to talk, that his mind was strong enough in the present, though it was a complete blank as to the past. The man's memory of his whole life before the fatal blow was entirely and absolutely erased. He neither knew his name, his language, his home, his business, nor anything else. The doctors held learned consultations upon him, and discoursed upon the center of memory and depressed tables, deranged nerve-cells and cerebral congestions, but all their polysyllables began and ended at the fact that the man's memory was gone, and that it was beyond the power of science to restore it. During the weary months of his convalescence he picked up reading and writing, but with the return of his strength came no return of his former life. England, Devonshire, Brisport, Mary, Granny—the words brought no recollection to his mind. All was absolute darkness. At last he was discharged, a friendless, tradeless, penniless man,

without a past, and with very little to look to in the future. His very name was altered, for it had been necessary to invent one. John Huxford had passed away, and John Hardy took his place among mankind. Here was a strange outcome of a Spanish gentleman's tobacco-inspired meditations.

John's case had aroused some discussion and curiosity in Quebec, so that he was not suffered to drift into utter helplessness upon emerging from the hospital. A Scotch manufacturer named M'Kinlay found him a post as porter in his establishment, and for a long time he worked at seven dollars a week at the loading and unloading of vans. In the course of years it was noticed, however, that his memory, however defective as to the past, was extremely reliable and accurate when concerned with anything which had occurred since his accident. From the factory he was promoted into the counting-house, and the year 1835 found him a junior clerk at a salary of £120 a year. Steadily and surely John Hardy fought his way upward from post to post, with his whole heart and mind devoted to the business. In 1840 he was third clerk, in 1845 he was second, and in 1852 he became manager of the whole vast establishment, and second only to Mr. M'Kinlay himself.

There were few who grudged John this rapid advancement, for it was obviously due to neither chance nor favoritism, but entirely to his marvelous powers of application and industry. From early morning until late in the night he labored hard in the service of his employer, checking, overlooking,

superintending, setting an example to all of cheerful devotion to duty. As he rose from one post to another his salary increased, but it caused no alteration in his mode of living, save that it enabled him to be more open-handed to the poor. He signalized his promotion to the managership by a donation of £1000 to the hospital in which he had been treated a quarter of a century before. The remainder of his earnings he allowed to accumulate in the business, drawing a small sum quarterly for his sustenance, and still residing in the humble dwelling which he had occupied when he was a warehouse porter. In spite of his success he was a sad, silent, morose man, solitary in his habits, and possessed always of a vague, undefined yearning, a dull feeling of dissatisfaction and of craving which never abandoned him. Often he would strive with his poor crippled brain to pierce the curtain which divided him from the past, and to solve the enigma of his youthful existence, but though he sat many a time by the fire until his head throbbed with his efforts, John Hardy could never recall the least glimpse of John Huxford's history.

On one occasion he had, in the interests of the firm, to journey to Quebec, and to visit the very cork factory which had tempted him to leave England. Strolling through the work-room with the foreman, John automatically, and without knowing what he was doing, picked up a square piece of the bark, and fashioned it with two or three deft cuts of his penknife into a smooth, tapering cork. His companion picked it out of his hand and examined

it with the eye of an expert. "This is not the first cork which you have cut by many hundred, Mr. Hardy," he remarked. "Indeed you are wrong," John answered, smiling; "I never cut one before in my life." "Impossible!" cried the foreman. "Here's another bit of cork. Try again." John did his best to repeat the performance, but the brains of the manager interfered with the trained muscles of the cork-cutter. The latter had not forgotten their cunning, but they needed to be left to themselves, and not directed by a mind which knew nothing of the matter. Instead of the smooth, graceful shape, he could produce nothing but rough-hewn, clumsy cylinders. "It must have been chance," said the foreman, "but I could have sworn that it was the work of an old hand!"

As the years passed, John's smooth English skin had warped and crinkled until he was as brown and as seamed as a walnut. His hair, too, after many years of iron-gray, had finally become as white as the winters of his adopted country. Yet he was a hale and upright old man, and when he at last retired from the managership of the firm with which he had been so long connected, he bore the weight of his seventy years lightly and bravely. He was in the peculiar position himself of not knowing his own age, as it was impossible for him to do more than guess at how old he was at the time of his accident.

The Franco-German War came round, and while the two great rivals were destroying each other, their more peaceful neighbors were quietly ousting

them out of their markets and their commerce. Many English ports benefited by this condition of things, but none more than Brisport. It had long ceased to be a fishing village, but was now a large and prosperous town, with a great breakwater in place of the quay on which Mary had stood, and a frontage of terraces and grand hotels where all the grandees of the west country came when they were in need of a change. All these extensions had made Brisport the center of a busy trade, and her ships found their way into every harbor in the world. Hence it was no wonder, especially in that very busy year of 1870, that several Brisport vessels were lying in the river and alongside the wharves of Quebec.

One day John Hardy, who found time hang a little on his hands since his retirement from business, strolled along by the water's edge, listening to the clanking of the steam winches, and watching the great barrels and cases as they were swung ashore and piled upon the wharf. He had observed the coming in of a great ocean steamer, and having waited until she was safely moored, he was turning away, when a few words fell upon his ear, uttered by some one on board a little weather-beaten bark close by him. It was only some commonplace order that was bawled out, but the sound fell upon the old man's ears with a strange mixture of disuse and familiarity. He stood by the vessel and heard the seamen at their work, all speaking with the same broad, pleasant, jingling accent. Why did it send such a thrill through his nerves to listen to it? He sat down upon a coil of rope and pressed his hands

to his temples, drinking in the long-forgotten dialect, and trying to piece together in his mind the thousand half-formed, nebulous recollections which were surging up in it. Then he rose, and walking along to the stern, he read the name of the ship, the "Sunlight," Brisport. Brisport! Again that flush and tingle through every nerve. Why was that word and the men's speech so familiar to him? He walked moodily home, and all night he lay tossing and sleepless, pursuing a shadowy something which was ever within his reach, and yet which ever evaded him.

Early next morning he was up and down on the wharf, listening to the talk of the west-country sailors. Every word they spoke seemed to him to revive his memory and bring him nearer to the light. From time to time they paused in their work, and seeing the white-haired stranger sitting so silently and attentively, they laughed at him, and broke little jests upon him. And even these jests had a familiar sound to the exile, as they very well might, seeing that they were the same which he had heard in his youth, for no one ever makes a new joke in England. So he sat through the long day, bathing himself in the west-country speech, and waiting for the light to break.

And it happened that when the sailors broke off for their midday meal, one of them, either out of curiosity or good nature, came over to the old watcher and greeted him. So John asked him to be seated on a log by his side, and began to put many questions to him about the country from

which he came, and the town. All which the man answered glibly enough, for there is nothing in the world that a sailor loves to talk of so much as of his native place, for it pleases him to show that he is no mere wanderer, but that he has a home to receive him whenever he shall choose to settle down to a quiet life. So the seaman prattled away about the town hall and the Martellow Tower, and the Esplanade, and Pitt Street and the High Street, until his companion suddenly shot out a long, eager arm and caught him by the wrist. "Look here, man," he said in a low, quick whisper. "Answer me truly as you hope for mercy. Are not the streets that run out of the High Street, Fox Street, Caroline Street, and George Street, in the order named? "They are," the sailor answered, shrinking away from the wild, flashing eyes. And at that moment John's memory came back to him, and he saw, clear and distinct, his life as it had been and as it should have been, with every minutest detail traced as in letters of fire. Too stricken to cry out, too stricken to weep, he could only hurry away homeward, wildly and aimlessly—hurry as fast as his aged limbs would carry him, as if, poor soul, there were some chance yet of catching up the fifty years which had gone by. Staggering and tremulous, he hastened on until a film seemed to gather over his eyes, and throwing his arms into the air with a great cry, "Oh, Mary, Mary! Oh, my lost, lost life!" he fell senseless upon the pavement.

The storm of emotion which had passed through him, and the mental shock which he had undergone,

would have sent many a man into a raging fever; but John was too strong-willed and too practical to allow his strength to be wasted at the very time when he needed it most. Within a few days he realized a portion of his property, started for New York, and caught the first mail steamer to England. Day and night, night and day, he trod the quarter-deck, until the hardy sailors watched the old man with astonishment, and marveled how any human being could do so much upon so little sleep. It was only by this unceasing exercise, by wearing down his vitality until fatigue brought lethargy, that he could prevent himself from falling into a very frenzy of despair. He hardly dared ask himself what was the object of this wild journey? What did he expect? Would Mary be still alive? She must be a very old woman. If he could but see her and mingle his tears with hers, he would be content. Let her only know that it had been no fault of his, and that they had both been victims to the same cruel fate. The cottage was her own, and she had said that she would wait for him there until she heard from him. Poor lass! she had never reckoned on such a wait as this.

At last the Irish lights were sighted and passed, Land's End lay like a blue fog upon the water, and the great steamer plowed its way along the bold Cornish coast until it dropped its anchor in Plymouth Bay. John hurried to the railway station, and within a few hours he found himself back once more in his native town, which he had quitted, a poor cork-cutter, half a century before.

But was it the same town? Were it not for the name engraved all over the station and on the hotels, John might have found a difficulty in believing it. The broad, well-paved streets, with the tram lines laid down the center, were very different from the narrow, winding lanes which he could remember. The spot upon which the station had been built was now the very center of the town, but in the old days it would have been far out in the fields. In every direction lines of luxurious villas branched away in streets and crescents bearing names which were new to the exile. Great warehouses, and long rows of shops with glittering fronts, showed him how enormously Brisport had increased in wealth as well as in dimensions. It was only when he came upon the old High Street that John began to feel at home. It was much altered, but still it was recognizable, and some few of the buildings were just as he had left them. There was the place where Fairbairn's cork works had been. It was now occupied by a great, brand-new hotel. And there was the old gray town hall. The wanderer turned down beside it, and made his way with eager steps but a sinking heart in the direction of the line of cottages which he used to know so well.

It was not difficult for him to find where they had been. The sea at least was as of old, and from it he could tell where the cottages had stood. But alas! where were they now? In their place an imposing crescent of high stone houses reared their tall fronts to the beach. John walked wearily down past their palatial entrances, feeling heart-sore and

despairing, when suddenly a thrill shot through him, followed by a warm glow of excitement and of hope, for, standing a little back from the line, and looking as much out of place as a bumpkin in a ball-room, was an old whitewashed cottage with wooden porch, and walls bright with creeping plants. He rubbed his eyes and stared again, but there it stood with its diamond-paned windows and white muslin curtains, the very same, down to the smallest details, as it had been on the day when he last saw it. Brown hair had become white, and fishing hamlets had changed into cities, but busy hands and a faithful heart had kept granny's cottage unchanged, and ready for the wanderer.

And now, when he had reached his very haven of rest, John Huxford's mind became more filled with apprehension than ever, and he became so deadly sick that he had to sit down upon one of the beach benches which faced the cottage. An old fisherman was perched at one end of it, smoking his black clay pipe, and he remarked upon the wan face and sad eyes of the stranger.

"You have overtired yourself," he said. "It doesn't do for old chaps like you and me to forget our years."

"I'm better now, thank you," John answered. "Can you tell me, friend, how that one cottage came among all those fine houses?"

"Why," said the old fellow, thumping his crutch energetically upon the ground, "that cottage belongs to the most obstinate woman in all England. That woman, if you'll believe me, has been offered

the price of the cottage ten times over, and yet she won't part with it. They have even promised to remove it stone by stone, and put it up on some more convenient place, and pay her a good round sum into the bargain, but God bless you! she wouldn't so much as hear of it."

"And why was that?" asked John.

"Well, that's just the funny part of it. It's all on account of a mistake. You see, her spark went away when I was a youngster, and she's got it into her head that he may come back some day, and that he won't know where to go unless the cottage is there. Why, if the fellow were alive, he would be as old as you, but I've no doubt he's dead long ago. She's well quit of him, for he must have been a scamp to abandon her as he did."

"Oh, he abandoned her, did he?"

"Yes—went off to the States, and never so much as sent a word to bid her good-by. It was a cruel shame, it was, for the girl has been a-waiting and a-pining for him ever since. It's my belief that it's fifty years' weeping that blinded her."

"She is blind!" cried John, half rising to his feet.

"Worse than that," said the fisherman. "She's mortal ill, and not expected to live. Why, look ye, there's the doctor's carriage a-waiting at her door."

At these evil tidings, old John sprung up, and hurried over to the cottage, where he met the physician returning to his brougham.

"How is your patient, doctor?" he asked in a trembling voice.

"Very bad, very bad," said the man of medicine, pompously. "If she continues to sink she will be in great danger; but if, on the other hand, she takes a turn, it is possible that she may recover;" with which oracular answer he drove away in a cloud of dust.

John Huxford was still hesitating at the doorway, not knowing how to announce himself, or how far a shock might be dangerous to the sufferer, when a gentleman in black came bustling up.

"Can you tell me, my man, if this is where the sick woman is?" he asked.

John nodded, and the clergyman passed in, leaving the door half open. The wanderer waited until he had gone into the inner room, and then slipped into the front parlor, where he had spent so many happy hours. All was the same as ever, down to the smallest ornaments, for Mary had been in the habit, whenever anything was broken, of replacing it with a duplicate, so that there might be no change in the room. He stood irresolute, looking about him, until he heard a woman's voice from the inner chamber, and stealing to the door, he peeped in.

The invalid was reclining upon a couch, propped up with pillows, and her face was turned full toward John as he looked round the door. He could have cried out as his eyes rested upon it, for there were Mary's pale, plain, sweet, homely features as smooth and as unchanged as though she were still the half child, half woman whom he had pressed to his heart on the Brisport quay. Her calm, eventless, unselfish life had left none of those rude traces upon

her countenance which are the outward emblems of internal conflict and an unquiet soul. A chaste melancholy had refined and softened her expression, and her loss of sight had been compensated for by that placidity which comes upon the faces of the blind. With her silvery hair peeping out beneath her snow-white cap, and a bright smile upon her sympathetic face, she was the old Mary improved and developed, with something ethereal and angelic superadded.

"You will keep a tenant in the cottage," she was saying to the clergyman, who sat with his back turned to the observer. "Choose some poor, deserving folk in the parish who will be glad of a home free. And when he comes you will tell him that I have waited for him until I have been forced to go on, but that he will find me on the other side still faithful and true. There's a little money, too—only a few pounds—but I should like him to have it when he comes, for he may need it, and then you will tell the folk you put in to be kind to him, for he will be grieved, poor lad, and to tell him that I was cheerful and happy up to the end. Don't let him know that I ever fretted, or he may fret too."

Now John listened quietly to all this from behind the door, and more than once he had to put his hand to his throat, but when she had finished, and when he thought of her long, blameless, innocent life, and saw the dear face looking straight at him, and yet unable to see him, it became too much for his manhood, and he burst out into an irrepressible, choking sob which shook his very frame. And then occurred a strange

thing, for though he had spoken no word, the old woman stretched out her arms to him, and cried, "Oh, Johnny, Johnny! Oh, dear, dear Johnny, you have come back to me again;" and before the parson could at all understand what had happened, those two faithful lovers were in each other's arms, weeping over each other, and patting each other's silvery head, with their hearts so full of joy that it almost compensated for all that weary fifty years of waiting.

It is hard to say how long they rejoiced together. It seemed a very short time to them and a very long one to the reverend gentleman, who was thinking at last of stealing away, when Mary recollected his presence and the courtesy which was due to him. "My heart is full of joy, sir," she said; "it is God's will that I should not see my Johnny, but I can call his image up as clear as if I had my eyes. Now stand up, John, and I will let the gentleman see how well I remember you. He is as tall, sir, as the second shelf, as straight as an arrow, his face brown and his eyes bright and clear. His hair is well-nigh black, and his mustache the same—I shouldn't wonder if he had whiskers as well by this time. Now, sir, don't you think I can do without my sight?" The clergyman listened to her description, and looking at the battered, white-haired man before him, he hardly knew whether to laugh or to cry.

But it all proved to be a laughing matter in the end, for, whether it was that her illness had taken some natural turn, or that John's return had startled it away, it is certain that from that day

Mary steadily improved until she was as well as ever. "No special license for me," John had said sturdily. "It looks as if we were ashamed of what we are doing, as though we hadn't the best right to be married of any two folk in the parish." So the bans were put up accordingly, and three times it was announced that John Huxford, bachelor, was going to be united to Mary Howden, spinster, after which, no one objecting, they were duly married accordingly. "We may not have very long in this world," said old John, "but at least we shall start fair and square in the next."

John's share in the Quebec business was sold out, and gave rise to a very interesting legal question as to whether, knowing that his name was Huxford, he could still sign that of Hardy, as was necessary for the completion of the business. It was decided, however, that on his producing two trustworthy witnesses to his identity all would be right, so the property was duly realized and produced a very handsome fortune. Part of this John devoted to building a pretty villa just outside Brisport, and the heart of the proprietor of Beach Terrace leaped within him when he learned that the cottage was at last to be abandoned, and that it would no longer break the symmetry and impair the effect of his row of aristocratic mansions.

And there in their snug new home, sitting out on the lawn in the summer-time, and on either side of the fire in the winter, that worthy old couple continued for many years to live as innocently and as happily as two children. Those who knew them well say

that there was never a shadow between them, and that the love which burned in their aged hearts was as high and as holy as that of any young couple who ever went to the altar. And through all the country round, if ever man or woman were in distress and fighting against hard times, they had only to go up to the villa to receive help, and that sympathy which is more precious than help. So when at last John and Mary fell asleep in their ripe old age, within a few hours of each other, they had all the poor and the needy and the friendless of the parish among their mourners, and in talking over the troubles which these two had faced so bravely, they learned that their own miseries also were but passing things, and that faith and truth can never miscarry, either in this existence or the next.

THE END.